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THE WORKS

OF THE

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A DEFENCE OF MODERN CALVINISM:

CONTAINING

AN EXAMINATION

OF

THE BISHOP OF LINCOLN'S WORK,

ENTITLED,

"A REFUTATION OF CALVINISM."

ALSO,

SERMONS AND CHARGES.

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PREFACE.

THE Author's first intention was merely to incorporate a few Strictures on Bishop Tomline's "Refutation" in a new edition of another work, on "Divine Equity and Sovereignty," which he still means to publish. This design was accordingly announced; but finding many of his friends desirous of having the Strictures in a detached form, and containing a professed reply to his Lordship's attack on Modern Calvinists, he has taken their advice, and now offers his "Examination" to the candid perusal of the dignitary whose work is the subject of it, and to the tribunal of the public.

The term "Modern Calvinism," which expresses the Calvinism here "defended," is adopted for three reasons. First, because this is what his Lordship evidently wishes to oppose, and by the rapid spread of which he appears to be displeased. He is aware that Calvinism is industriously and successfully propagated; and by some obnoxious passages out of Calvin's Works he endeavours to convince the public mind that such tenets ought to be exploded. It is, therefore, proper that the public should be also aware, that the Calvinism of the body of people attacked indiscriminately by his Lordship does not include the whole of what he ascribes to them. A second reason is, because the great majority of those who pass under the general denomination in modern times, regard

some of Calvin's positions as mere exceptionable inferences which he has drawn from parts of his own system with too much haste, or too little caution. They consider these inferences (especially some deduced from the doctrine of Divine decrees) as injurious excrescences, which deform the general beauty of his theological scheme, and which do not contribute to its real strength. In brief, they consider his fundamental premises, viewed in their proper light, as neither requiring nor admitting some of his conclusions, which have given just offence to a large portion of Christians who still retain his name, and who are induced to retain it (as a term of distinction) because they apprehend that no other of the Reformers, of whatever country, nor even any of the Christian Fathers, have so beautifully exhibited, or so ably defended, the Scripture doctrine of sovereign grace. A third reason is, because the Modern Calvinists in general, in this country, do not adopt the ecclesiastical discipline which was originally included in the term Calvinism. These considerations justify, to the Author's own mind, the ground he has taken, as well as the title of his book.

[All the SERMONS in this volume were published by the Author himself, except Nos. IX., X., and XI., which afford "faithful specimens of the Author's general style of preaching to his own congregation." The first CHARGE was delivered, it will be observed, on the 28th of July 1796, to the first Missionaries to the Islands of the South Sea; the second was delivered at the ordination of the Rev. S. Bradley, formerly of Manchester; and the last was addressed to the Rev. J. Hawksley at his ordination over the church that assembled in the chapel formerly in Aldermanbury Postern, London. This old sanctuary was pulled down a few years since, when the people made arrangements to worship in one of the suburbs.—ED.]

MODERN CALVINISM DEFENDED.

CHAPTER I.

AVOWED SENTIMENTS OF THE BISHOP ON ORIGINAL SIN, FREE-WILL, AND THE OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, EXAMINED.

SECTION I.

The Bishop's avowed Sentiments on ORIGINAL SIN *examined.*

§ 1. What is a fair mode of inquiry on controverted subjects. § 2. The subject stated. § 3. The sentiment that *original righteousness* is not entirely lost, examined. § 4. *Original righteousness,* what. § 5. How understood by the compilers of the Articles. § 6. How entirely lost. § 7. Even supposing it to mean good qualities and principles indefinitely. § 8, 9. What the intended alteration by the Assembly of Divines. § 10. The practical advantages of insisting on this doctrine. § 11. That every *good affection* is not entirely lost, examined. § 12. The true state of the question. § 13. What the Calvinists really hold on this point. § 14. His Lordship's observations on the parable of the sower, considered. § 15. That the *power of obeying* still remains, examined. The subject stated. § 16. The ambiguity of the term power. § 17. The capability of a carnal mind, what. § 18. Observations on Cain and Abel. § 19. Import of the phrase "inclineth to evil," examined. § 20. In what sense Calvinists admit that God gives power to every man.

§ 1. ONE of the fairest methods of examining his work that an author can desire, is to state in his own words the sentiments he avows, and then to try them by that standard which the nature of the subject legitimately requires. This is what the writer of the following strictures very sincerely desires to do, in the most respectful manner; and if, in any instance he should fail in the attempt, he hopes it will not be imputed to an ungenerous design,

or a cherished principle of disrespect. The hope of this construction he is the more disposed to entertain, as it is not his purpose to defend every expression or unqualified sentiment maintained by that author whom his Lordship of Lincoln undertakes chiefly to refute; and as he is not conscious of aiming to serve any party, at all hazards, but rather to promote the cause of truth in the spirit of Christian benevolence.

§ 2. On the different subjects debated, many things are advanced by his Lordship which are maintained alike by himself and by those whom he professedly opposes. It would be impertinent to enlarge on those things; and to dwell minutely on the smaller shades of difference would lead to a needless prolixity. For every important purpose, I conceive, it will be sufficient to notice the most radical points, in which the minor variations are virtually included. Those points on the subject of original sin may be reduced to three heads: viz., that original righteousness is not entirely lost,—that every good affection was not eradicated, —and that the power of obeying still remains. These positions constitute a prominent part of his Lordship's avowed sentiments, as will immediately appear from his own statements.

§ 3. His Lordship's avowal of the first of these positions is full and explicit, in the following words:—"In appealing to the public formularies of our Church, I shall first notice the article upon Original Sin, in which it is said, that 'man is very far gone from original righteousness:' this expression implies, that *original righteousness is not entirely lost;* that all the good qualities and principles, with which man was at first created, are not absolutely destroyed. That this is the plain and obvious sense of the passage, is evident from the following circumstance: when the Assembly of Divines, in the reign of Charles the First, undertook to reform, as they called it, our Articles according to the Calvinistic creed, they proposed to omit the words, 'man is very far gone from original righteousness,' and to substitute for them, 'man is wholly deprived of original righteousness.' It was admitted by both parties, that the two sentences conveyed ideas extremely different; and the proposed alteration was rejected by those who wished to maintain the ancient and established doctrine of the Church of England, in opposition to the peculiar tenets of Calvin."*

* Refutation, p. 50.

§ 4. "*Original righteousness* is not entirely lost." Let us calmly examine this position. While terms are left undefined, upon subjects wherein precision of language is more than ordinarily required, controversy is likely to become progressive and perplexing. If by "original righteousness" one person understands "good qualities and principles" indefinitely, while another understands the perfection of them, what prospect is there of agreement, however extended the ratiocination? If his Lordship intend the latter part of the sentence quoted to be explanatory of the former, he adopts the first of these meanings. But, abstracted from a peculiar connexion, the common and obvious meaning of the term "*righteousness*" is rectitude, or perfect conformity to what is right. And the original righteousness of man, all must allow, consisted in nothing less than such perfect conformity.

§ 5. What evidence, therefore, is there, that the compilers of the Articles intended by "righteousness," good qualities and principles indefinitely, rather than the perfection of them? If they employed the term in a sense so unusual in such a connexion, they must have been remiss, in point of precision, not to state it. But to suppose this, where precision must have been a leading design, is uncharitable, It is not therefore by any means to be assumed, that the framers of the Articles meant by "righteousness," good qualities and principles indefinitely, rather than the perfection of them. They speak of a *standard* from which "man is far gone;" but an indefinite degree of good qualities and principles can be no standard. This would leave everything undefined and uncertain. Whereas to say that man is far gone from the perfection of them avoids an absurd, and establishes an important meaning.

§ 6. This perfection of good qualities and principles was entirely lost. For nothing less can be intended by being "far gone" from it. If men have gone astray from the fold of God, surely they have lost *entirely* the privilege of being in that fold. Their "original righteousness" included a complete standing in the Divine approbation; and if that complete standing be now entirely lost, so likewise must that original righteousness by which it was secured. This, however, is not inconsistent with degrees of deviation from righteousness. For though "all we like sheep have gone astray," some by personal disobedience have gone further than others. And the Article assures us that "man [and there appears no ground of exception] is *very far* gone from original righteous-

ness." Every man, therefore, has entirely lost the perfection of his nature, which the term "original righteousness" very naturally and most properly expresses.

§ 7. But even supposing, for argument's sake, that the term "righteousness" is intended to express "good qualities and principles" indefinitely, still there is an important sense in which every man has lost it entirely. The same human qualities and principles which are good in one respect may be bad in another, even in the most important acceptation. There may be in one man, compared with another, a stronger attachment to temperance, chastity, veracity, or honesty; but it would be fallacious to infer, on this account, that he is the subject of these virtues in a primary sense. He has less actual vice than many others, while, at the same time, his qualities and principles, operating another way, may be radically vicious. His virtues are merely negative;—he is less disposed to intemperance, unchastity, falsehood, or dishonesty. Such partial and comparative virtues may be found in an Atheist; but will any one say, that in such a character "original righteousness" is not entirely lost? Persons possessed of such comparative good qualities and principles may be utterly destitute of a cordial submission to the will of God, a genuine approbation of His holy law, or of His blessed gospel; and if these good qualities be absent, is not the being, the very essence of original righteousness, absolutely destroyed—entirely lost?

§ 8. When the Assembly of Divines, in the reign of Charles the First, proposed to omit the words "man is very *far gone* from original righteousness," and to substitute for them "man is *wholly deprived* of original righteousness," how does it appear that their doctrinal view of the subject was materially different from that of the first compilers? It would be more accurate to say, with due deference to his Lordship, that the two sentences *might* convey ideas extremely different, than that they were intended to do so. The phrase "wholly deprived" might be objected to, lest any should infer that the cause of it was an arbitrary act of God, as contradistinguished from a voluntary act of man. It is natural to suppose a predilection in favour of an established formulary, where no important advantage could be proposed by adopting the alteration. The one mode of expression more strongly represents man as the author of his loss, while the other simply states the extent of that loss in a mode which *might* be perverted to a bad

use. Considering man as a moral *agent*, he is "very far gone" from his original state, and as a *sufferer* he is "wholly deprived" of it. To have gone far, very far, from a given state of mind, must signify, if plain language have any definite meaning, that the *state* intended was "entirely lost;" and that, regarded as a privilege, man was wholly deprived of it.

§ 9. Upon the whole, therefore, it does not appear that the rejection of the Assembly's proposal implied any disagreement of sentiment, but rather turned upon the most unexceptionable mode of expressing it. The article, however, is sufficiently explicit in shewing that man has *lost* his pristine perfection, no less than if it were said that he is "wholly deprived" of it. No man who is unchanged by gracious influence has even the nature of true wisdom, much less its perfection. He is essentially defective as to the end he aims at, and consequently the means he adopts cannot have the nature of righteousness, whatever sagacity, or comparative wisdom, he may discover in the use of them.

§ 10. To insist much on this doctrine has the most salutary effect on the minds and conduct of men, as being very frequently attended with a Divine blessing and gracious influence; while a neglect of stating it in a close and searching manner, in a course of Christian instruction, is in fact found to be highly injurious to vital religion. Until men are thoroughly convinced of their deplorable defects and their mental maladies, there is no probability that they will mourn for their sins, become poor in spirit, or hunger and thirst after righteousness. That unguarded and crude representations have been made of the doctrine is but too true; yet even this has not been so fatal to the interests of real Christianity as the contrary extreme. Because in the one case, however disgusting or frightful the representation may be, an appropriate remedy is held forth; whereas a picture encouraging self-flattery tends to eclipse the grace of Christ, or to diminish, in the sinner's view, the gospel remedy. Among converts of the latter class, I should expect but little gratitude to God, or love to Christ, or zeal in propagating His gospel. How far this remark accords with matter of fact, is left with the candid inquirer to determine from observation.

§ 11. His Lordship further asserts that every *good affection* was not eradicated:—"All idea of distinction between right and wrong was not obliterated from the human mind, or *every good affection*

eradicated from the human heart." *—"The heart was in a high degree depraved, but *every good affection* towards God and towards man *was not totally extinguished.*" †—"Let us next consider the parable of the sower, and particularly the explanation of that seed which fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit; 'That on the good ground,' says Christ, 'are they which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience:' here we have again our Saviour's authority for saying, that there is *some honesty, some goodness of heart* in the human race; and that different men possess these virtuous qualities in different degrees, since of the seed which fell upon good ground, some brought forth 'an hundred-fold, some sixty, some thirty.'" ‡

§ 12. "Every good affection was not eradicated,—was not totally extinguished,—there is some goodness of heart in the human race." These positions appear to be advanced against the supposed tenets of Calvinists. But in one sense of the terms employed, they are not at all opposed to Calvinism; for what Calvinist would maintain that affections—conjugal, parental, filial, paternal, friendly, patriotic, or loyal—are not good? The question is, in what sense are such affections good, previous to a supernatural influence? They are, doubtless, comparatively good,—that is, compared with their opposites. Yet this they may be, while essentially defective compared with the will of God, and the revealed rule of righteousness; since they are exercised by many persons who are "fast bound with the chains of their sins," and in a very degraded state of moral depravity. A person may have a sincere and strong affection to another, which is good compared with "envy, hatred, and malice," without possessing what is essential to real virtue and moral goodness.

§ 13. What his Lordship asserts, that "*all idea* of distinction between right and wrong was not obliterated from the human mind," might lead the reader to suppose that Calvinists held the contrary opinion. So far, however, is this from being the case, that they feel no reluctance in extending the assertion to fallen angels as well as to men, and are in the habit of reciting these words of their poet with approbation:—

> "The devils *know*, and tremble too;
> But Satan cannot love."

* Refutation, p. 3. † Ibid., p. 10. ‡ Ibid., p. 14.

But his Lordship proceeds to say, that "every good affection towards *God* was not totally extinguished." That a carnal mind, under the dominion of sin, and led captive by Satan at his will, may have some sense of gratitude to the bountiful Creator and Benefactor, and some kind of love to Him, is readily granted; but the question is, Whether that love has not in it "the nature of sin," while the object of it is made subservient to selfish ends,—such ends as are opposed to the standard of righteousness? This is what Calvinists maintain, according to the sacred oracles, which declare that "the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. They that are in the flesh cannot please God."* "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."†

§ 14. The observations made on the parable of the sower will be thought by most readers, I presume, very remarkable:—"There is some honesty, *some goodness of heart* in the human race." Supposing the four kinds of hearers to represent "the human race," three parts out of four appear fruitless,—*without* honesty or goodness of heart. How, then, can this be an apology in point for the honesty and goodness of "the human race?" And respecting the fourth part, that bare good fruit in different degrees, what reason is there for concluding that the success was owing to some native goodness or honesty, rather than to Divine grace? Has the Spirit of God no efficiency in preparing the heart, and insuring success? The apostle of the Gentiles explicitly ascribes it to God:—"I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."‡ The Calvinists, therefore, think it more scriptural, and more rational, to ascribe the different degrees of fruitfulness attending the preached gospel to Divine gracious agency, than to "virtuous qualities" possessed by the human race in different degrees, independently of that agency. Besides, as the truth of the gospel is supposed to be proclaimed in the hearing of all alike, if the cause of fruitfulness be ascribed to native virtuous qualities, and *all* the human race have *some* of these qualities, how comes it to pass that so large a proportion of mankind are represented by our Saviour as bringing forth *no* fruit?

* Rom. viii. 7, 8. † 1 Cor. ii. 14. ‡ 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7.

§ 15. In the next place, his Lordship contends that the *power of obeying* still remains. For thus he states and argues:—"We are told in the book of Genesis that 'the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering;' and unto Cain he said, 'If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door.' May we not hence infer that the immediate sons of Adam lived under a Divine law, which they had the *power of obeying* or of disobeying?" * "They were *capable of obeying* it, [a rule of life,] although in fact their obedience has been very rare, and always imperfect." † "The Article [on original sin] does not pronounce, with the Calvinists, that man of his own nature *can* perform nothing but evil, but that he 'inclineth to evil;' a doctrine fundamentally different, since an inclination, though strong, *may* be conquered." ‡ "Those who saw and heard what Jesus did, *were of themselves capable* of understanding that He 'was the Christ, the Son of God.'" § "God gives to every man, through the means of His grace, a *power* to perform the conditions of the gospel." ‖ These are his Lordship's avowed sentiments on the subject of human power.

§ 16. To every observant reader of moral and theological discussions, it must be very apparent that ambiguity often attends the use of the word *power*. In writers who do not define their terms, we find it, even in controversy, standing indiscriminately for physical strength, for opportunity of acting, for a sufficient inducement to act, and for moral ability. Now, except a writer explain what *kind* of power he designs, there can be no close reasoning on the subject. I know of no Calvinist who denies that fallen man has power, in the sense of physical strength, to will or to act according to his pleasure,—or of opportunity of acting well if so disposed,—or of a sufficient inducement to act aright. The point, therefore, is simply this, Whether man in his native degeneracy, irrespective of gracious renewing influence from the Holy Spirit, has that kind of power which consists in a good disposition or inclination? and whether it renders a man "capable, of himself," to understand the spiritual design of the gospel, to love God supremely, to love the Lord Jesus Christ as a holy Saviour, and to approve unreservedly of God's "holy will and commandments?"

§ 17. That many carnal men are capable, in different degrees, of investigating the evidences of Christianity, and have power to

* Refutation, p. 4. † Ibid., p. 9. ‡ Ibid., p. 51. § Ibid., p. 19. ‖ Ibid., p. 64.

point out with considerable force the criteria of revealed religion, is not to be denied. They may also perceive a degree of harmony in the Divine dispensations, the reasonableness of many commands and obligations, and many wonderful traits of Divine goodness and mercy, as well as the equity of many awful judgments. But is this any sufficient proof that their heart is right with God, or that they have the root of sincere piety? They may be still under condemnation as practical unbelievers, and destitute of that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord: though perceiving, and in some respects approving of better things, they may be the slaves of sin, totally averse from the yoke of Christ, and prevailingly actuated by "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life:" they may habitually be making "the pleasures of sin" their chief good; and, being thus in the flesh, they *cannot* please God, though possessed of physical powers, opportunities, and sufficient inducements.

§ 18. The scriptural account we have of Cain and Abel, affords no good evidence that either of them possessed a native moral ability to please God. St Paul explains the passage, and assures us, that "by *faith* Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." But that faith was not "of himself, it was the gift of God," for why should we suppose that it flowed from a source different from that of Christian faith? And again, what Calvinist would say, that Cain would not have been accepted, if he came to God with right ends and motives? They both had physical power, a favourable opportunity, and a sufficient inducement for offering an acceptable service. The fault of Cain, therefore, was all his own; but it does not thence follow that the faith of Abel had no higher source than his own native power, or that God by His grace did no more for Abel than for Cain. Should any one be disposed to think that God was bound in *justice* to do as much for the one as for the other, let him calmly reflect, first, that it is degrading to the Divine freedom to suppose that He is obliged to do all the good that He can; secondly, that it is a reflection on the character of God, since it is evident in fact that He does more for some of His rational creatures in the matter of salvation than for others; and, thirdly, that to suppose God is bound in *justice* to exercise *mercy*, is a contradiction in terms: for what is mercy, what can it be, but a favour beyond the claims of justice?

§ 19. When the Article declares that man of his own nature

"inclineth to evil," it expresses that very impotence which Calvinists ascribe to man in his fallen state. And that this *is* their meaning, is plain from their constant avowal, that a spiritual change confers upon the soul no new physical power, but only a different inclination towards God and holiness. The influence it receives may be called "the spirit of power," whereby the mind is invigorated for holy obedience. That an inclination to evil *may* be conquered, is plain from the fact that in many happy instances it is conquered. But is it ever conquered without Divine assistance? If the aid of grace be necessary, why should it be ascribed to man's native goodness of heart? If not necessary, why should we be exhorted to pray for it with importunity? And if St Paul testified that he was not "of himself" sufficient to think a good thought, with what propriety can it be asserted that an unconverted man, who "of his own nature inclineth to evil," is "of himself capable" of understanding, savingly, that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of God?" Our Lord tells Peter that such knowledge was revealed to him by His heavenly Father. And St John affirms, that no man can say, that is, to saving purpose, "that Jesus is the Christ, but by the Holy Ghost." The apostle could not mean that no man, without the Holy Ghost, could say this in a cursory manner, or maintain it as a doctrinal truth, because the contrary is a plain fact. He must therefore intend to inculcate, that a just knowledge and cordial approbation of Jesus as the Christ is from the Holy Spirit.

§ 20. When his Lordship asserts, that "God gives to every man, through the means of His grace, a *power* to perform the conditions of the gospel," the Calvinists have no controversy with him, except about the meaning of the term. Taking the word "power" for opportunity, or for a sufficient inducement, they admit the assertion as an important truth. But to suppose that every man, through the means of grace, has a prevailing inclination to perform the condition of the gospel, is contrary to indisputable fact: since the means of grace are to great numbers, through their own fault, "a savour of death unto death." In short, what we maintain is, that the power which man has lost, through original sin, is an effectual or prevailing *inclination to good.*

Section II.

The Bishop's avowed Sentiments on Free-will *examined.*

§ 1. Sources of ambiguity in discussions about free-will. § 2. Wherein the freedom of the will consists. § 3. The idea of *will*, and that of its *freedom*, of different kinds. § 4. The Bishop's opinion stated. § 5. The sentiment that *impressions* made upon the mind depend on reason and free-will, examined. § 6. The Calvinistic sentiment stated and defended. § 7. God is under no obligation in justice to change any sinner's heart. § 8. That conversion is owing to the exercise of our *natural powers*, examined. § 9. The Calvinistic notion of conversion stated and defended.

§ 1. Much of the ambiguity which attends discussions about free-will arises from the want of precision in the use of this term. It would afford but little interest to enumerate the different acceptations in which it has been taken by controversial writers. What can be rationally meant by it, but the will in a state of freedom? When, therefore, it is said that man has free-will, it is the same as affirming that his will is free. But free from what? It is not free from Divine energy supporting it in existence. It is not free from a perpetual tendency to apparent good; for in this must consist its glory and perfection: nor is it free from aversion to apparent evil, without which aversion it could have no excellency. It is not free from being influenced by the disposition, whether that disposition be good or evil; otherwise we might as consistently trust an habitual thief, as an habitually honest man; we might give as easy credit to a known liar, as to a man of general veracity. When we apprehend the disposition to be evil, we always expect, other things being equal, the will to be influenced by it to unworthy ends. On the contrary, when we apprehend the disposition to be good, we expect the will to be influenced by it to ends and decisions which are laudable.

§ 2. The question returns, from what is the will free? In other words, wherein consists its freedom? Until this point be clearly ascertained by both parties, all disputing about "free-will" must be a mere war of words. What Calvinists maintain is, that the will, in its accountable actions, is free from constraint to evil, whether that evil be real or apprehended. Nothing but the

Supreme Author of our being, can be supposed to constrain or impel the human will. He supports it in existence, indeed, and makes it act in the choice of its object; but that object is never chosen *as* evil, otherwise the possession of such a faculty would not be a blessing but a curse, and therefore unworthy of a beneficent Creator to confer upon us. Nor is it constrained or impelled to real evil, except when, through the influence of prejudice, it is viewed as an eligible good. It is also free from a restraint from good, both real and apprehended. To suppose it restrained from apprehended good, would be to tantalise it,—to support an active principle in perpetual disappointment and wretchedness; while to suppose it restrained from real good, would be an aspersion on its Maker and Preserver, who has made real good its only satisfying portion. The human will, therefore, is free from constraint and restraint, in these respects, in its accountable elections. This is what modern Calvinists profess; and it is difficult to conjecture what greater freedom his Lordship would claim for the human mind.

§ 3. It is worthy of remark, that while the idea of will is positive, as of an active power, that of freedom is negative, as of mere exemption—it is the bare denial of constraint and restraint. To suppose freedom or liberty, as predicated of the will, to be a power, or an active principle, superadded to the will, is to confound things which, in their proper nature, are totally different. It is to use words without distinct ideas. Whether his Lordship has kept his thoughts free from embarrassment on this subject, may deserve his reconsideration, especially as much of his "Refutation" appears to turn on this important point.

§ 4. There are two things avowed by his Lordship, under the head of free-will, which require examination. First, that an impression on the mind depends on reason and free-will; and, secondly, that conversion is owing to the exercise of natural powers. There is a sense in which it is commonly known that Calvinists readily admit these positions; but they are here advanced by his Lordship in opposition to Calvinism, the growth of which he professes to impede. In fair construction, therefore, the positions must be meant in some other sense, which they do not avow. In matters of controversy, not to distinguish is to continue in a labyrinth.

§ 5. His Lordship states, that the impression which the truths

of the gospel make upon the mind depends on reason and free-will. His words, in their connexion, are these:—"And surely the admonition which follows this parable, 'Take heed therefore how ye hear,' implies that the *impression* which the truths of the gospel make upon the minds of men, *depends* upon the manner in which they attend to them, that is, upon the exercise of their own reason and free-will." * This statement must imply, that the Calvinists disavow it either altogether, or else in a sense which his Lordship disapproves; otherwise why should it be urged against them? It is, however, incumbent upon me to assure him and the public, that modern Calvinists do not cashier from their system "the exercise of reason and free-will." They consider reason as the faculty which compares ideas, and the will as free in all its elections: they maintain that these faculties were first given and are still continued to man, in order to be exercised; that, when exercised aright, they answer the important end of promoting "the *impression* which the truths of the gospel make upon the minds of men;" and that in this respect the impression "*depends* upon the *manner* in which they attend to them." What more than this would his Lordship require? If anything, it must be, that the exercise of our own reason and free-will is the exclusive cause of a good impression of gospel truths upon our minds. I say a *good* impression; for though the truths of the gospel are always and uniformly good, the impressions made, through man's fault, are often bad. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God." † "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life." ‡

§ 6. That a good impression of Divine truth on the human mind depends exclusively on the exercise of reason and free-will, we dare not concede. The parable, explained by our Lord himself, expressly declares that "an honest and good heart" constitutes an essential difference, where the impression is good and lasting. All the different kinds of hearers had the exercise of reason and free-will, and all had equal objective inducements for exercising them in the same manner. We regard Divine truth as the instrumental cause, or moral means, of good impressions; but reason and free-

* Refutation, p. 14. † 1 Cor. i. 18. ‡ 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.

will as physical powers, which are at liberty either to reject, or to receive and appropriate the truth proposed. To contend that reason and free-will are *themselves* the cause of the different manner of their exercise, is to argue in a circle. The question is, on what depends the proper exercise of reason and free-will? Surely not on the exercise of reason and free-will! We say, on the state of the heart, as "good and honest," through the influence of the Holy Spirit. If the tree be thus made good, the fruit will be good; but if the tree be bad, it is certain the fruit will not be good. Thus good impressions require Divine truth as the seal, reason and free-will as the hand, and honesty of heart as the soft wax. A dishonest and bad heart, like the hard wax, resists the seal. God vouchsafes to all men who hear the gospel a proposal of Divine truth, and physical powers, judgment and reason, conscience and free-will; these in themselves are valuable gifts of heaven: but He is not under any *obligation* to soften the hard heart, or to alter the nature of man, which, of itself, ever since the first apostasy, "inclineth to evil." This deserves further explanation.

§ 7. It is manifest that God *can* take away the heart of stone, and give a heart of flesh, for He has declared that He *will* do it: nor is it consistent with worthy thoughts of God, or with becoming reverence, to say that He cannot do it in reference to any of the human race, however depraved. Yet, if He were under obligation in justice to His creatures, or if it any way became Him to effect this, we are sure it would be done; for He cannot be unjust to His creatures, nor omit anything which it becomes Him to do. Consequently, when any heart is left unchanged, God does not omit what becomes Him, and all the blame attaches to the unbelieving and impenitent sinner. And in those instances wherein the heart is made susceptible of good impressions, through the intervention of truth and free-will, we acknowledge the operation of discriminating grace. For if the obligation is not of justice, there is no other alternative.

§ 8. His Lordship further avows, that *conversion* is owing to the exercise of our natural powers. His words are these:—"The inhabitants of Samaria, by giving heed to the preaching of Philip, and by seeing the miracles he performed, believed the things which he spake concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, and were baptized, both men and women. The *conversion*,

therefore, of these persons also was owing to the exercise of their own *natural powers.*"* Far be it from Calvinists to discard the use of divinely-instituted means, especially attention to preaching, and a believing regard to the testimony of God in His Word. They are in the habit of inculcating these duties, and many, both men and women, are converted, in the use of them, to the faith of Jesus and to the love of God. But we dare not say that such conversions, or that of the Samaritans, should be ascribed exclusively to the exercise of natural powers. If his Lordship includes the grace of God as an essential cause of that conversion, disposing men to exercise these powers aright, we have the pleasure of agreeing with him.

§ 9. *Conversion,* in our view of it, denotes an actual turning from vice to real virtue,—from every false refuge to Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth in Him with the heart,—from an inordinate love of self and of the world to the love of God,—and from the practice of sin, whether open or secret, to the exercise of divinely-prescribed duties, and all holy obedience. In this representation, I presume, his Lordship acquiesces. Now, the question is, whence originates so great a change, both inward and outward? to what is it owing? Can it satisfy any serious and reflecting inquirer to be told, that the change in converted persons "was owing to the exercise of their own natural powers?" Do not the disobedient exercise their own natural powers? Yes; but the sincere converts, it may be said, exercise them in a different manner. Granted; but the inquirer has a right to ask *why* they do so, for this is the very point in question; and he is entitled to expect a better answer, than, They do it because they do it. Our answer is,—and let the reader judge whether it be not conformable to Scripture and the principles of sound reason,—the happy change is owing to the special grace of God in the hearts of true converts, disposing them to exercise their natural powers in a proper manner. I said *special* grace; because that which is displayed in the gospel objectively, which bringeth the tidings of salvation through Christ, has appeared to all men,—is alike common to the converted and unconverted,—to numbers who perish as well as to them who are eventually saved. Consequently, that grace which causes the difference of result must be subjective, or internal and special.

* Refutation, p. 23.

Section III.

The Bishop's avowed Sentiments on Divine Operations *examined.*

§ 1. The subject stated. § 2. The Bishop's declaration respecting the *manner* of co-operation, examined. § 3. Divine operation does not infringe on human freedom. § 4. Is not merely in the way of suasion. § 5. Is internal. § 6. Not immediately on the will, but the heart. § 7. With a design to beget a virtuous principle. § 8. Which is illuminating; and, § 9. Antecedent to man's co-operation. § 10. That the communication of the Spirit is *subsequent* to belief, examined. § 11. Different kinds of influence—common, and, § 12. Extraordinary; this preceded by faith. § 13. Faith distinguished as to its principle and exercise. § 14. Extraordinary influence not communicated to any who refused to believe. § 15. That Divine influence is communicated *by baptism*, examined. § 16. This not the office of baptism; § 17. But to represent. § 18-24. Divine influence and baptism not inseparably associated. § 25. If grace were irresistible, men *could not* fall into sin, examined. § 26. In what sense grace is irresistible. § 27. In what sense good men can fall into sin, and also cannot. § 28. That irresistible grace cannot be employed as an *argument* for private care and diligence, examined. § 29. Its fallacy shewn from analogy.

§ 1. As his Lordship does not hesitate to acknowledge, in general, the doctrine of Divine influence on the human mind, it is not necessary here to enter into a professed vindication of it; and it is no small pleasure to me that he so openly avows, and so ably defends, in his "Christian Theology," many important points of revealed doctrine, which he holds in common with the Calvinists, especially the doctrine of the sacred Trinity in Unity, as well as that of atonement for sin by the substitution of Jesus Christ. Some things, however, he advances respecting Divine operations which appear to me highly exceptionable. While he frankly acknowledges that the *manner* of Divine co-operation is unknown to him, which is a sufficient apology why he does not attempt to explain it, he yet contends that the communication of the Holy Ghost is subsequent to belief indiscriminately,—that baptism imparts the Holy Ghost,—that if Divine influence were irresistible, men could not fall into sin,—and that the doctrine of irresistible grace cannot be employed as an argument for private care and

diligence.* On these points let us attend to his own declarations.

§ 2. Though it might be thought presumptuous in me to pretend to instruct his Lordship on a point which, he explicitly avows, is unknown to him; yet a few observations, for the sake of the general reader, may be hazarded, perhaps, without offence. The declaration I refer to is this:—"In what manner, or in what proportion, if I may say so, God and man co-operate, I am utterly unable to explain or discover. I do not indeed hesitate to add, with Bishop Bull, 'Modum quidem concursus gratiæ divinæ cum humana voluntate exacte definire, ac dicere quid sola præstet gratia, quid cum et sub gratiâ liberum agat arbitrium, non *exiguæ difficultatis* res est.'" † But there is an important difference between a subject being attended with considerable difficulty in our attempts at accurately defining and describing it, and its being utterly unknown. Whatever difficulties belong to the manner and proportion of the co-operation of God and man, there are some considerations which tend considerably to lessen them.

§ 3. We may be certain that the freedom of the human will is not infringed by the Divine operation; since to infringe the freedom of a moral agent is to diminish his accountability in the same proportion, his freedom being the very foundation on which his accountability depends. The reality of Divine operation on some human minds, and the certainty of a future account of our actions, whether good or evil, are fundamental and acknowledged truths. Consequently the operation does not infringe our freedom.

§ 4. We may further be certain that the operation is not merely external, in the way of suasion, but internal. We have a distinct idea of moral means, external testimonies and proclamations, proofs and persuasive considerations, addresses to the fancy and the passions; and it is easy to conceive how such things operate on the mind, according to its previous disposition and preparatory state. We know, as a matter of fact, that the most solemn Divine testimonies, the most awful proclamations of wrath and mercy, the most conclusive proofs, the most persuasive considerations, the most affecting addresses, the most lively descriptions, and the most powerful appeals to the passions, not only fail to engage many minds to love God and to obey Him from the heart, but

* Refutation, compare pp. 28, 29, 36.

† Bull, Harm. Apost. Dissert. Post.

often become the innocent occasion of growing aversion to God and holiness. The discourses and miracles of our Saviour before the Pharisees and rulers, is a case in point. The very same things excited the love of some, and the hatred of others. And this the apostles, and subsequent preachers of the gospel ever since, have had abundant cause to notice; and the parable of the sower illustrates it. If moral suasion were of itself sufficient, addressed to the reason and free-will of men, none of our Saviour's hearers would have remained unconverted; but the rejectors of Him and His gospel wanted a good and honest heart.

§ 5. We must therefore conclude, that the operation which renders the means effectual to salvation is internal, or in the person himself. The word of God is in itself perfect, and needs no operation to make it more excellent: consequently it is not *in*, nor, strictly speaking, *with* the word, in order to make it different from what it always was. It must then be a physical operation, as contradistinguished from what is moral. Let not the reader be alarmed at the term *physical* operation; for we do by no means intend by it what some have been pleased to suggest. The term is used by Calvinists, not to convey the idea of producing a superadded physical power, or natural faculty, but to represent a positive and actual agency by the Holy Spirit, enabling the person to exercise the powers he had before in a proper manner. It is not used as a contrast to spiritual or supernatural, but rather to any agency which may be supposed to exist in objects of choice presented to the mind. The latter are properly denominated *moral means*, because they act according to the will and disposition of the person.

§ 6. Hence, the immediate object of the Spirit's operation is not the will, but the heart, as the source of moral actions. A physical or positive influence on the will itself directly, would in the same degree destroy its freedom; whereas a direct influence on the heart leaves the freedom unimpaired. The will can only be *solicited* by objective means, or *indirectly* influenced by an inward principle. And in every virtuous choice there must be both a virtuous principle and a worthy object of choice presented to the mind; and each is equally essential. A worthy object presented where the principle is bad, will never generate a virtuous choice; and a worthy principle where the object is unworthy, is equally barren and ineffectual. If it be said that an unworthy object may

be rejected, as well as a worthy one chosen, and each virtuous; it is answered, that such a rejection is virtuous only in a negative sense. Where the virtue is positive, there is always implied a more worthy object preferred, in comparison of it. To reject idols or falsehood is but a negative virtue; but to prefer God to idols, or truth to falsehood, where that preference is sincere and cordial, is positive virtue.

§ 7. The end of Divine operations must be to produce a virtuous principle, or, in the language of the prophet, to "take away the heart of stone, and to give a heart of flesh." Free-will, under the direction of this principle, or as far as the principle exists, ever chooses virtuously. It never disapproves of gospel truth fairly presented to it, but, on the contrary, receives and lives upon it. It is possible, indeed, that a person possessed of a holy principle may be embarrassed with respect to some very important parts of gospel truth, through the defect of language, or his misconception of terms, or the prejudices of education or of party,—in a word, through some defect of representation; but let that defect be removed, the person still retaining the virtuous principle, and no essential part of holy truth will be rejected. He cannot thus commit sin, "for his seed remaineth in him." His co-operation by free-will with the revealed will of God will be in exact proportion to the clearness with which he perceives it, and the godly sincerity of his principle. To suppose that free-will, while the disposition is good, receives not the blessings fairly represented to it in the gospel of the grace of God, and in the same proportion, is as unreasonable as to suppose that a thing acts contrary to its own proper nature.

§ 8. We may further observe, that the principle generated by Divine operation illuminates the mind, enabling it to discover the spiritual nature and superior excellency of the truths revealed in the sacred oracles; to know what is the hope of our calling, and what are the riches of our glorious inheritance. God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shines into our hearts, whereby we discover the glories of the Divine perfections as displayed in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Whereas to the unprincipled the light of revealed truth shines without effect; their darkness comprehendeth it not; their understanding continues dark, "being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness [or, hardness] of their

heart." While the heart is hard, the understanding will be blind to the same degree, notwithstanding the outward light of truth in the Scriptures. Hence the ablest expositors and preachers have cause to pray that God may prepare the hearts of their readers and hearers, that they may earnestly attend to, that they may understand, that they may "mark, learn, and inwardly digest" the truths represented.

§ 9. From the premises we learn, that the co-operation of man is subsequent to the operation of God, and that man co-operates freely, willingly, and cordially; the holy principle generated disposing the subject of it to admire, love, and prefer what is really and relatively excellent. We also learn that the subject of Divine operation, in his religious elections, acts not only from principle, but also intelligently. He knows in whom he believes, and whom he serves—the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent. He discovers the evil of sin and the beauty of holiness,—he is wise unto salvation,—he chooses an end worthy of God to reveal, and adopts the means prescribed for obtaining it, in *proportion* to the principle produced by Divine operation. These are truths which cannot be denied, I conceive, without denying that principles operate according to their appropriate nature, and confounding free-will with unmeaning chance.

§ 10. His Lordship next avows that the communication of the Holy Ghost is *subsequent* to belief. "In the following passage," he observes, "St Paul represents the faith of the Ephesians in Christ to have been the consequence of their having heard the gospel preached, and the communication of the Holy Ghost to have been subsequent to their faith: 'In whom [namely, in Christ] ye also *trusted*, *after* that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, *after* that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.' The order to be here noticed is this: first, the hearing of the word; secondly, belief produced by that; thirdly, the communication of the Spirit in consequence of that belief. From these examples, which comprehend Jewish, Samaritan, and Gentile converts, we conclude in general, that those to whom the apostles preached expressed their faith in Christ *before* the Holy Ghost was poured out upon them; and that the Spirit was *never* communicated to those who *refused* to believe." *

* Refutation, p. 24.

§ 11. In the passage now quoted there are several objectionable particulars, especially if it be intended to weigh against Calvinism. For, in the first place, it takes for granted what neither is, nor can be proved—viz., that there is but *one kind* of communication of the Holy Spirit. Now, it is plain that in the Old Testament times holy persons were the subjects of Divine influence, in a manner altogether different from the communication of the Holy Ghost to which his Lordship alludes. Is it supposable that from the beginning of time to the present, there have been any holy persons who were not the subjects of Divine operation; and yet how few of these were the subjects of extraordinary communications and miraculous gifts? Was not Peter the subject of holy influence and an enlightening principle, before he had any visibly miraculous communication of the Holy Ghost?* Had not all the faithful apostles of Christ a sanctifying operation of the Spirit before the day of Pentecost? Do not men now pray, that God would "cleanse the thoughts and desires of their hearts by the inspiration of His Holy Spirit?" In short, few things are more plain, relating to Divine operations, than the existence of both a merely internal, and a miraculous operation of the Spirit. And their design is evidently different;—the one being to promote religion and salvation in the individual who is the subject of it, the other to propagate Christianity in the world during the minority of the Christian Church.

§ 12. In the next place, from the unproved assumption now mentioned, his Lordship draws this general conclusion, "That those to whom the apostles preached, expressed their faith in Christ *before* the Holy Ghost was poured out upon them." The question however ought to be, in order to disprove the doctrine of Calvinists, not whether faith preceded the extraordinary and miraculous effusion of the Spirit, but whether saving faith is prior to His internal, ordinary, and enlightening influence. That those to whom the apostles preached expressed their faith in Christ before they received the one, is no conclusive argument that they were not the subjects of the other operation *prior* to the expression of their faith. What is recorded of Lydia is a case in point. It is expressly said, that "the Lord opened her heart," as the predisposing cause of her attention and faith.

§ 13. The statement made in the quotation, it may be further

* Matt. xvi. 17.

observed, confounds the exercise of faith with its principle. No Calvinist denies that the hearing of the word precedes the exercise of faith; for we constantly maintain that belief is produced by hearing, or, as the apostle expresses it, that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." There can be no belief without a testimony; but surely the thing believed can no more produce the principle or spirit of faith than the act of reasoning can produce the reasoning faculty, or the act of volition produce the will. We are neither so unscriptural nor unreasonable as to suppose that believing, trusting, or sealing, are not preceded by hearing: we set forth the testimony of God before our hearers in order that they may believe and trust in it, and that they may be sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise as the consequent privilege; but we should offend against Scripture and reason were we to profess that the principle of faith, any more than the testimony believed, is "of ourselves," as the production of free-will.

§ 14. Equally inapplicable to Calvinists is the intimation, that they (for who else can be intended by his Lordship?) pretend that the Spirit is sometimes communicated to those who *refuse* to believe. We freely grant, and openly profess, that the communication of the Spirit in an extraordinary manner for the first propagation of Christianity was *subsequent* to belief, and consequently "was never communicated to those who refused to believe," and we are as ready to deny that any person is the subject of Divine influence, and, at the same time, *refuses* to believe. But to suppose a person, prior to such influence, refused to believe, and believed in consequence of it, is neither inconsistent with Scripture nor with reason. Few will deny that Saul of Tarsus became the subject of Divine operation, when previously he had refused to believe; for he was "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," at the very time he was arrested by Divine power between Jerusalem and Damascus. But no sooner did he experience that heavenly power, than his enmity against the Saviour and His disciples was subdued, and "he refused to believe" no longer; for to imagine that he first believed without receiving the spirit of faith, but that this was imparted to him as the consequence of believing, is at variance with all analogy. But the insufficiency of reason and free-will to make the heart good, or to beget a spiritual principle of saving faith, has been already considered.

§ 15. It is very explicitly avowed by his Lordship, that *baptism washes away sin, and imparts the Holy Ghost.* "The rite of baptism," he observes, "was ordained by Christ himself; and its twofold office is here [Acts ii. 38] described by His apostle—namely, that it *washes away* the guilt of former *sin*, and *imparts the Holy Ghost* to those who shall *previously* have repented and believed. It had been foretold by John the Baptist, that Christ should baptize with the Holy Ghost, meaning, that the *baptism* instituted by Christ, and administered by His apostles and their successors, *should convey* the supernatural assistance of the Spirit of God. This communication being made at baptism, at the time of admission into the gospel covenant, every Christian must possess the invaluable blessing of preventing grace, which, without extinguishing the evil propensities of our nature, inspires holy desires, suggests good counsels, and excites to just works."* As to the quotation from Dr Barrow, which asserts that this "hath been the doctrine constantly, and with very general consent, delivered in the Catholic Church," it proves one thing at least—that the Catholic Church has never been so pure but it needed reformation; needed it, in proportion as the sentiment here maintained is inconsistent with the genuine sense of the Sacred Scriptures, and the reasonableness of Christianity. And whether this be not the fact, let us now proceed calmly and impartially to examine.

§ 16. That the rite of baptism was ordained by Christ himself is admitted on all sides; but that its twofold office is to *wash away the guilt of sin,* and to *impart the Holy Ghost,* according to Peter, or any other inspired writer, wants proof. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."† Here the first question is, with what remission of sin stands connected? With repentance, with baptism, or with both united? Let Peter himself answer: —"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come," &c.‡ We know from Scripture testimony that the penitent shall be pardoned, though unbaptized; and we know too that every baptized person was not pardoned, as in the case of Simon Magus. Consequently, the union of repentance and baptism was not an indispensable condition for the remission of sin. It is therefore

* Refutation, p. 29. † Acts ii. 38. ‡ Acts iii. 19.

plain, that as baptism was not, either alone or united with repentance, inseparably connected, even in the apostolic age, with the remission of sin, it was not one office of baptism to "wash away the guilt of former sins." Peter's expression must mean, to make it consistent with other scriptures, "Repent—for the remission of sins, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ;" so that baptism is urged as a suitable mode of testifying their repentance, because an instituted rite of entering into a new visible relation to Jesus Christ, the true Messiah.

§ 17. Baptism, being "an outward visible sign of an inward spiritual grace," *represents* the washing away of sin; but it is not the *sign* that effects it, though by a common figure of speech it is put for that which does so in reality. Thus David figuratively ascribes to the sign what evidently belongs to the thing signified. "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean."* What really takes away the guilt of past sins, is the merit of Christ's obedience unto death in our stead, and which, according to the plan of Divine mercy in the gospel, we are encouraged to receive by faith for that end. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."† "If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ . . . . purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"‡ Hence we may see, that to ascribe to baptism the washing away of guilt is to confound the sign with the thing signified.

§ 18. Nor can it be consistently maintained, that the thing signified is, in its application, *inseparably associated* with baptism. That it may please God, in some instances, to apply the blessing *at* the ministration of the ordinance is not disputed, because He may do it then as well as at any other time: but that He has laid Himself under the obligation of a promise to do so, does not appear from His words; and plain facts recorded there, as before shewn, prove the contrary. The same may be said of *imparting the Holy Ghost;* for this plain reason, that there appears no greater connexion between baptism and the giving of the Spirit, than between baptism and the remission of sin. It is allowed, as before concerning the remission of sin, that God may give His Spirit to the baptized person at the time of ministration, because He is confined to no time; and it is proper to *pray* for the blessing on that occa-

* Ps. li. 7. † 1 John i. 7. ‡ Heb. ix. 13, 14.

sion, not only because we may ask it of our Father in heaven at all times, as children may ask a gift of their earthly parents, but also because the use of the *sign* is calculated to remind us of our need, and to excite our desires after the blessing represented.

§ 19. The same remark is applicable to the ancient custom of "laying hands" on the head of a person in some peculiar act of solemn prayer. It is an outward sign whereby the subject is affectionately discriminated from others, and in the use of which blessings have been sought. Hence the employment of it is calculated not only to bring to remembrance God's promised blessing of His Holy Spirit, but also to increase our importunity. The miraculous gifts of the Spirit were bestowed upon many in the Christian Church *long after* their baptism, as is evident from the following passage:—"Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost." * Here, not baptism but the imposition of hands was the outward sign; not *at* the time of baptism, but at some future period. Had the Holy Ghost been imparted by baptism as a matter of course, Simon would not have been destitute of the heavenly gift.

§ 20. But his Lordship supposes, that it is the office of baptism to impart the Holy Ghost to those who shall "*previously have repented and believed.*" Here we might ask, did any ever believe and repent without the influence of the Holy Ghost? Is not the spirit of faith and repentance a heavenly gift? Do not all true penitents and believers readily ascribe this to the Father of lights, and the exalted Lord and Saviour? Does not supplication to God for the spirit of love, of repentance and faith, for unbaptized persons imply the same? Is not this communication of the Holy Spirit's influence different from His miraculous effusion, designed for different purposes, and attended with different effects? and was not that which was extraordinary, given in a manner, and at differ-

* Acts viii. 14–19.

ent intervals of time, sufficient to prove that it was not the *office* of baptism to impart it? It is well worthy of consideration, whether to pray for the *same kind* of operation now, as what followed the apostolic laying on of hands, be not as much chargeable with presumption and enthusiasm as to pray for the gift of tongues, or for power to raise the dead.

§ 21. His Lordship, when explaining the meaning of John the Baptist, asserts, that baptism administered by the apostles and their successors "should convey the *supernatural* assistance of the Spirit of God." If this, however, was the only use of baptism, it ought to have been discontinued from the time of the apostles, or at least of their immediate successors, when similar effects no longer followed. How much more worthy of the sacred oracles is the other interpretation—viz., that the effusion of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was *itself* a kind of baptism, an initiation into the mysteries of Christ's spiritual reign, rather than a mystical effect of water-baptism? That the word baptism was sometimes used figuratively by Christ and His apostles, as well as by John the Baptist, is evident. When our Lord was about to be initiated into His last sufferings, He says, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" * "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? . . . . Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with." † Here evidently the "cup" denotes deep sorrow, and "baptism" a being devoted to, set apart for, or initiated into that state in which he exclaimed, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." ‡ St Paul says, that the Israelites were *baptized* into Moses, when he clearly means initiated into his dispensation; and St Peter calls a sincere confession of the Christian faith baptism. Noah and his family, by entering into the ark, were initiated into a new dispensation, and persons entering into the Christian Church professed the same; and when their answer proceeded from "a good conscience," purified by faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ, it was connected with salvation: § the apostle expressly declares that by baptism he meant "the answer of a good conscience towards God." If, therefore, the word was thus used figuratively by Christ and His apostles, why must John the Baptist, as above quoted, speaking of Christ *baptizing* with the Holy Ghost, be debarred

* Luke xii. 5. † Matt. xx. 22, 23. ‡ Matt. xxvi. 38. § 1 Pet. iii. 21.

from the figurative use of it, especially when the literal sense, expressing water-baptism, is encumbered with so many and such insuperable difficulties?

§ 22. It must be allowed by every well-informed and dispassionate person, that many who have succeeded the apostles officially were contemptible moral characters. Be that as it may, to suppose that a penitent believer has not the Spirit of God imparted to him *until* he has been *baptized*, but has this blessing *after*, if but administered in due form by a successor of the apostles, (even though resembling Simon Magus in the temper of his mind,) is the direct way to a contempt of the religion that professes it, and the direct way to promote the cause of infidelity. That the unworthiness of the minister does not disannul the real design of a divinely-instituted ordinance, is fully admitted. The objection lies against the pretended design or office of baptism. Baptism itself, however unworthy the minister, we maintain, exhibits, in a very significant manner, our need of moral purity,—the mercy of God by Jesus Christ in making provision for it according to the gospel,—and our obligations to renounce everything inconsistent with Christianity. The notion of a divinely-instituted rite conferring grace *ex opere operato*, or as a condition *sine quâ non*, or by any appointed *inseparable connexion* of the sign and the thing signified, ought to be buried in oblivion, with other Jewish and Popish prejudices, lest the holy ordinances of God be exposed to contempt. If we would defend the gospel against unbelievers, or confirm the faith of Christians, let us not insult their understanding; but shew that its doctrines and institutions are not unreasonable, however inadequate the principles of reason were to discover them *à priori*.

§ 23. "Every Christian must possess the invaluable blessing of preventing grace." This we cannot allow, unless by "Christian" be meant one who bears the moral image of Christ, as distinguished from one who is merely baptized. To suppose that the communication of the invaluable blessing of grace is made "at baptism, the time of admission into the gospel covenant," as a matter of course, in virtue of some appointed rule of operation, is not less unscriptural than the sentiment that the institution of confirmation communicates confirming grace, or the Divine ordinance of marriage conveys the grace of a spiritual union to Him who is the Head and Husband of His Church. In short, the sentiment mixes

heaven and earth, and confounds physical and moral connexions. That God *may* communicate grace *at* baptism, was before admitted; but that this or any other institution can impart, convey, or communicate grace, or is adapted in its nature to be the channel of conveyance, is an idea perfectly incongruous and irreconcilable with just views of Divine operations and of sacred rites. By baptism, indeed, we are brought into a new visible relation; and in an external sense may be said to be made or constituted "children of God, members of Christ, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven." But we cannot suppose this new relation to be an inward change, or an introduction into a saving relation to God, and Christ, and heaven, without in effect supposing that a baptized hypocrite is a good Christian; that a man under the prevailing influence of the world, the flesh, and the devil, if baptized, is a spiritual child of God; that a baptized person, though full of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is a worthy member of Christ, and in the way to heaven! Neither baptism, the Lord's supper, nor any other ordinance can become inwardly profitable to the subject, except according to the proper use he makes of it. This, I am aware, some *may* controvert; for there are some who *do* call in question the first principles of knowledge, and the proper nature of things, as well as the verities of holy writ.

§ 24. Until it be made apparent that baptismal internal grace has an existence, little need be said about its supposed properties. It cannot be doubted that subjective internal holy influence is the source of holy desires, good counsels, and just works; but to affirm that it inspires, suggests, and excites them, seems to be an employment of figurative language calculated to mislead the judgment, and, therefore, misplaced. However, we are told that this preventing grace does not "extinguish the evil propensities of our nature." But surely the *tendency* of all Divine grace is to extinguish the fire of sinful lusts, and to counteract evil propensities; and a person in whom no degree of flagrant evil is extinguished, though baptized, has no degree of holy grace. For if to extinguish and counteract evil be not an effect, by what medium can its existence be proved? If his Lordship means that there is a degree of holy influence which does not imply a perfection of character, or that persons may be found who were not made perfect at baptism, all modern Calvinists, be it remembered, are of the same opinion.

§ 25. "If grace were irresistible," his Lordship asserts, "men

could not depart from it, and fall into sin."* In this hypothetical proposition we may notice the ambiguity of the terms "grace" and "irresistible." The Calvinists do not maintain that grace, in every acceptation of the word, is irresistible. A little reflection may satisfy any candid person that in Scripture usage it conveys different ideas, according to the connexion, and especially these three—exhibited favour, an internal principle of spiritual light and life, and Christian virtues in exercise. Fact proves that exhibited favours—as gospel truth, Christ, and salvation—are actually resisted; and, therefore, grace in this acceptation (which is common in Scripture) is not irresistible. And fact further proves that Christian virtues—as faith, hope, and charity—are resisted by our depraved propensities, at least in some degree. When, therefore, Calvinists maintain that grace is irresistible, they mean an internal principle of light and life. And the reason why they think so is, that it is not an object exhibited or presented to the *will*. When there is no option, there can be no voluntary rejection. Thus the principle of reason is irresistible in every subject of it, though its proper use, and those things which are adapted to improve it, are often resisted. In like manner, though the principle of Divine grace is irresistible, those things are often resisted which, in their own nature, are adapted to promote gracious determinations, affections, and obedience.

§ 26. Yet there is a sense in which we believe that grace, as to its use and exercise, is irresistible by anything without or within the mind. In what cases, and to what degree, must depend on the sovereign will of God. If God *design* (and who can question His right to design?) that His internal grace shall not be resisted, is it not in that degree irresistible? When Calvinists plead for the irresistibility of grace, they take two things into account: First, the nature of that grace which they intend—not the common favour contained in the annunciation of gospel blessings, or in the exhibition of mercy by any Divine institution, but the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit, producing a new heart or a right principle of action. Secondly, they take into the account the will of God, supporting and strengthening the principle, making it victorious over every difficulty. To plead that common favour—the grace of God that bringeth salvation, the proclamation of mercy which is destined for all men—is resistible, or to set the will of

* Refutation, p. 63.

God, His efficacious purpose respecting the vital holy principle, out of the question, is to plead without a cause, and to contend without an opposer. What can be plainer in fact, or more reasonable in thought, than that God imparts His favours when, where, how, to whom, and to what degree He pleases? And if He determine that any possessed of a gracious principle shall continue to the end victorious over every resistance, who will be so presumptuous as to say that His grace in them can be successfully resisted? Is it not to limit His mercy and omnipotence?

§ 27. That good men *can* fall into sin is a painful fact; and it is equally certain that God is "able to keep them from falling,"—"to keep them by His mighty power through faith unto salvation." Their liability to fall is of themselves, but their ability to stand is of God. While He "keeps them from falling," they cannot fall; but if left to themselves, they both can and will fall. A deep sense of this dependence upon God is the essence of true devotion; and its language is, "Hold Thou me up, O Lord, and I shall be safe: without Thee, Divine Saviour, I can do nothing; but I can do all things if Thou strengthen me." Were there no defect in our nature, or were that defect counteracted by confirming grace, there would be no falling into sin. But to contend that He *ought* to do this for us, either in justice or in mercy, is surely both impious and absurd: impious, as impeaching His actual conduct; for He does not keep any of His servants, while in this world, in a state of sinless perfection: "There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not;" and "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." The requisition, moreover, is absurd: it manifestly implies that God ought to confer upon us all the favour He can confer,—that His favours are not at His own disposal,—that He ought to act to the extent of possibility in shewing mercy: and to say that mercy, or grace, or any *favour* is *due* to the creature, is clearly a direct contradiction, both in meaning and in terms.

§ 28. It is further asserted by his Lordship, that irresistible grace cannot be employed as an *argument* for private care and diligence. His words are:—"God does not so work in us as to exclude our own care and industry; that is, he does not work irresistibly. For, supposing God to work irresistibly, the wit of man cannot make an *argument* out of it for private care and diligence."*

* Refutation, p. 37.

Taking the words "irresistible grace" in the sense before explained, and as Calvinists use them, the objection has no more force than the following, viz. :—"Supposing God to work irresistibly" in imparting to us the principle of reason, we "cannot make an *argument* out of it for private care and diligence," respecting the improvement and right use of it. Again, the succession of day and night, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, is uncontrollable by man; therefore he "cannot make an *argument* out of it for private care and diligence," to work while it is day, to provide in summer for the winter season, or to sow his seed that he may reap his harvest in due time. Or, because every seed, every plant, and every animal, has its own peculiar nature, and the principles of its nature are irresistibly wrought in it, we "cannot make an *argument* out of it for private care and diligence," by improving that nature and cherishing those principles.

§ 29. Surely if the certainty and irresistibility of principles in physical nature be no good argument against the propriety of private care and diligence, or do not supersede our own industry, whether these principles be in ourselves or in others, some good reason should be assigned why the same is not applicable to gracious nature. Nay, if in physical nature the irresistibility of a principle, and the certainty of its continuance, is a strong argument *for* care and industry in its cultivation, we are entitled to ask, why the irresistibility of grace, in the sense explained, should not be an argument of equal force *for* fear and diligence, care and industry? What God requires should be attended to with care and diligence; but He requires belief, love, fear, hope, and universal obedience. Now is it conceivable that the principle from whence these required graces proceed, being the irresistible work of God, is inconsistent with such requisitions? We do not say, with the Remonstrants, that our *possessing* the principle is the *foundation* of the requirement, but that the possession of it is a corroborating argument for the exercise of these required graces and tempers. In a word, the irresistibility of a Divine nature in its bestowment, is a strong argument for its careful, industrious, and diligent improvement.

CHAPTER II.

AVOWED SENTIMENTS OF THE BISHOP ON REGENERATION, JUSTIFICATION, FAITH, AND GOOD WORKS, EXAMINED.

SECTION I.

The Bishop's avowed Sentiments on REGENERATION *examined.*

§ 1. The subject stated. § 2. The word regeneration as used by Calvinists. § 3. Admitted by them in different senses. § 4. They do not confound regeneration and conversion. § 5. Nor limit the time of either. § 6. Remarks on being "born of water and of the Spirit." § 7. In what sense baptism may be called a new birth. § 8. A spiritual change not an immediate effect of baptism. § 9. The formation of Christian virtues and tempers may be called regeneration. § 10. The Calvinists do not confound regeneration with "indefectible grace." § 11–25. Passages out of the New Testament produced by the Bishop to prove that regeneration signifies baptism, examined. § 26. Christians have a double birth. § 27. Candidates for baptism were *supposed* to be regenerated in the scriptural sense. § 28–31. The meaning of the term regeneration, as used by the Christian Fathers, examined.

§ 1. UNDER this head we find his Lordship explicitly avowing, and indeed contending, that regeneration is the immediate effect of baptism, and is never used in Scripture or by the fathers to express any operation upon the human mind subsequent to baptism. Thus he states his thoughts on the term itself and its meaning:—"As the term regeneration, or new-birth, is frequently used by *modern Calvinists* when speaking of their favourite tenets of instantaneous conversion and indefectible grace, it may be proper to explain the application and true meaning of this word in Scripture, and in the public formularies of our Church. Those who are baptized are immediately translated from the curse of Adam to the grace of Christ. They become reconciled to God, partakers of the Holy Ghost, and heirs of eternal happiness. This great and wonderful change in the condition of man is as it were

a new nature, a new state of existence; and the holy rite by which these invaluable blessings are communicated is by St Paul figuratively called 'regeneration,' or new-birth. Many similar phrases occur in the New Testament: such as '*born* of water and of the Spirit;' '*begotten again* unto a lively hope;' 'dead in sins, and *quickened* together with Christ;' '*buried* with Christ in baptism;' '*born again*, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible;' 'Baptism doth now save us, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ;" 'According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;' 'Except a man be *born again*, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'" * "The word regeneration, therefore, is in Scripture solely and exclusively applied to the one *immediate effect* of baptism once administered, and is never used as synonymous with the repentance or reformation of a Christian, or to express any operation of the Holy Ghost upon the human mind *subsequent* to baptism." † His Lordship also quotes the following passages with approbation:—"The Christians did in all ancient times continue the use of this name for baptism; so as that they *never* use the word regenerate or born again, but that they mean or denote by it baptism." ‡ "Regeneration in the language of the fathers *constantly* signifies the participation of the sacrament of baptism." §

§ 2. The "modern Calvinists," it is true, use the word "regeneration," to express *something* different from baptism; but not what his Lordship ascribes to them—not "instantaneous conversion and indefectible grace." The previous question here is, whether they are authorised to use this word, in different connexions, with different acceptations, provided they give a definition of their meaning? Supposing, without granting, that the word in Scripture usage *always* denotes baptism, by what law are they deprived of the customary privilege of using any word, in any language, to denote a determinate meaning affixed to it, when that meaning is announced and stated? And if it be lawful thus to use a word differently from the inspired writers, (as is frequently allowed in other instances,) much more is it lawful to deviate from the custom of ecclesiastical writers, whether ancient fathers or

* Refutation, p. 83. † Ibid., p. 86.
‡ Wall's Hist. of Inf. Bapt., Intr., sect. 6; Refutation, p. 87.
§ Nicholls on Com. Pray.; Refutation, p. 88.

English Reformers. This, however, is urged only for argument's sake.

§ 3. Modern Calvinists admit the term regeneration in three acceptations, principally, according to the connexion. First, as denoting, figuratively, baptism; secondly, the immediate effect of Divine influence on the mind; thirdly, the formation of Christian tempers and graces. The Christian fathers, and after them many of the Protestant Reformers, by a frequent figurative use of the term regeneration for baptism, the outward sign, have greatly contributed to confound both. At first, they no doubt thought that the figure was sufficiently plain, and that there was no danger of mistaking the one for the other. The thing signified being always more excellent than the sign, there is a propensity in the human mind to give the sign the more honourable appellation. Sometimes the thing signified is to be inferred, without any determinate name distinct from the sign. In this case, there is an equal propensity to magnify the latter until the former is totally eclipsed. Thus the Jews made circumcision, as an outward rite, to be both the sign and thing signified; or, more properly speaking, the latter was absorbed in the former. And when St Paul contended that the thing signified might be enjoyed by the Gentiles without the sign, how violent was the opposition! The priests and the scribes, the rabbis and the common people, almost in a body, opposed him. Of the truth of this statement the apostle's letters to the Romans, the Galatians, and the Hebrews, are abundant evidence.

§ 4. We do not confound *regeneration* with *conversion:* for, by the former we understand an immediate effect of the operation of God the Holy Ghost in the mind; but by the latter, the voluntary act of the mind in turning from all forbidden objects and pursuits to God and holiness by Jesus Christ, as the consequence of regeneration. The important change expressed by regeneration is the work of God, and *may* take place in an infant; but conversion, implying a voluntary act upon conviction, *cannot* take place in an infant mind. Regeneration *may* also take place *at* baptism, or *before,* or *after* baptism; but were we to say that it *must* be at or by that ordinance, we ought to stand reproved as guilty of enthusiasm, as being wise above what is written in the sacred oracles. Conversion also, in our view, *may* take place, before, or after, or at baptism; but *cannot* take place without regeneration, any more

than voluntary motion can be exerted without a vital principle. Regeneration, as the immediate effect of Divine influence, we maintain is instantaneous;—and so, indeed, does his Lordship; it being, according to him, "the one *immediate effect* of baptism once administered;" nay, so immediate, so instantaneous, that it is never "*subsequent* to baptism!"

§ 5. To limit either regeneration or conversion to any period of human life, or as the effect of any external rite, while the will of God is sovereign in dispensing blessings, and the will of man is free from constraint, we regard as enthusiastic. An opinion which appears *à priori* so very improbable, so inconsistent with the analogy of Divine dispensations,—which makes a physical act, as water-baptism is, to be a certain medium of a spiritual effect, while the subject is entirely passive,—ought, we conceive, before it can be exonerated from this charge, to have no dubious evidence of Divine authority. We study the Scriptures, as well as our opponents, and conclude that they contain no such evidence. His Lordship, however, has produced several passages in support of the contrary opinion. Let us now candidly examine them.

§ 6. "Born of water and of the Spirit." There was a dispute among the Jews about purifying, occasioned, it should seem, by the baptism of John and that of Christ's disciples.* Now it seems natural to suppose that they regarded the terms "baptizing" and "purifying" as synonymous; and indeed what more properly expresses the nature of baptism than a ceremonial purification? The "washing of water by the word" constitutes the ceremonial institution; and the signification is the removal of moral impurity. The Jews hastily inferred, (and Nicodemus was not free from the prejudice,) that baptism itself was enough to constitute a complete disciple. But our Lord shews them their mistake, by stating that saving discipleship includes a heavenly and spiritual, as well as a watery birth. Hence, to be baptized is to be "born of water," which introduces the subject of it into a visible relation to the Messiah, as circumcision introduced its subject into the privileges and obligations of the preceding dispensation; and to be spiritually regenerated is to be "born of the Spirit," without which no one can be a spiritual subject of Christ's kingdom, or be rendered meet for heaven. For that which is spiritual must be born of the Spirit, as that which is flesh must be born of the flesh, or as that which is

* John iii. 25, 26.

natural must arise from the constituted laws of nature. Can anything, therefore, be plainer than these words to shew, first, that to be "born of water" is to be baptized, by which we enter on a new state of relative existence, or enjoyment of external privileges, and consequently of corresponding obligations; secondly, that to be "born of the Spirit" is an effect of some operation of the Spirit of God in the mind, distinct from, and superior to, the baptismal rite; thirdly, that those who regard the immediate effect of this operation of the Spirit of God in the mind as regeneration are conformable to Scripture in the use of the term.

§ 7. We freely admit that to be "born of water" is, in an inferior sense, to be "born again," when contrasted with our "natural birth;" for as by the latter we are introduced into a new state of existence, so by the former, in a figurative sense, we are brought into a new state of things,—into new relations to Christ and His Church, new privileges and obligations, new associates and services. In a word, by being "born of water," we become externally and visibly related to the Christian dispensation, as a man by being circumcised became related to the Jewish Church. But to infer that an external rite, however significant, introduces the subject of it into a spiritual and saving relation to God, was an error into which the Jews had very generally fallen, and from which many professing Christians are not free. "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."* Here it is quite clear that circumcision was a rite by which a change "of the heart," a change "in the spirit," was the thing signified; and that persons being circumcised in the flesh was no proof of their being circumcised in the spirit. And from the analogy of Divine dispensations we may conclusively argue (*mutatis mutandis*) with the apostle: he is not a Christian who is one outwardly; neither is that baptism which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Christian who is one inwardly; and baptism is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

§ 8. Let the candid reader now judge whether we have any room to infer that a spiritual change is an immediate effect of an external rite; either of circumcision, of baptism, or, by parity of

* Rom. ii. 28, 29.

reason, of any other. As to the words first noticed, "born of water" and "born of the Spirit," (for the word *born* is evidently implied in the latter clause,) there is no intimation, either in the words themselves or in the connexion, that the one birth is the immediate effect of the other any more than being born again of water is the immediate effect of being born of the flesh. A mere nominal Christian is born of the flesh and of water, but if changed in heart and spirit, he is also born of the Spirit. And, if I may express my own conviction, every attempt to shew that being "born of the Spirit," "born from above," "born of God," and the like, denote either baptism itself, or some immediate effect of baptism, has a direct tendency to expose the simple but sublime religion of Jesus Christ to the derision of its enemies; and ought to be as strenuously exploded as the unscriptural and unintelligible dogmas of transubstantiation and consubstantiation.

§ 9. It has been observed before, that the modern Calvinists use the term regeneration as denoting sometimes the *formation* of Christian virtues and tempers; which acceptation also they deduce from Scripture usage.* In order to form that "new man" which consists in knowledge, faith, hope, and love, humility, meekness, patience, and all holy tempers exercised by true Christians, the word and ordinances of God, as well as His Holy Spirit, are necessary. But these means are not like mechanical instruments, producing an effect on the human mind irrespective of its own choice, since it is a plain fact that means identically the same produce effects directly opposite. Properly speaking, the means are objects proposed to the view of the mind, and occasions afforded to excite and draw forth into exercise the Divine life. And thus baptism *may* be (but not without the voluntary concurrence of the subject) the means of this regeneration, because it may be the occasion of forming knowledge, faith, charity, &c., in a mind born of the Spirit. But, then, on the same ground, this kind of regeneration may also immediately succeed the use of the Lord's supper, preaching, reading, or any other means of grace.

§ 10. The Calvinists do not confound regeneration, in any sense of the term, with "indefectible grace." If at any time they use the word "indefectible" as a property of grace, they distinguish between the act of generating grace as a principle of life, and its continuance without defection, by Divine support. It is time,

* Col. iii. 10.

however, to advert to some other passages, adduced by his Lordship to prove that *regeneration means baptism*—"a single act performed upon every individual."

§ 11. "Begotten again unto a lively hope."* These words of St Peter, according to his Lordship, *relate to baptism.* Why he should think so, it is difficult to say; since there appears nothing either in the words themselves or in the context to support that conclusion:—"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath *begotten us again unto a lively hope* by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."† In Scripture, the word hope is used to express either an exercise of mind in reference to some future good promised, or the object itself which is hoped for, or the ground on which that hope rests; and, if I mistake not, in every place where the word is used, it may be naturally referred to some one of these acceptations. The words of Peter, however, "lively hope," seem very clearly to express an *exercise of mind,* without a figure. For the epithet "lively" is inapplicable to any other; and the *ground* of hope immediately follows, "the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Then is expressed immediately the *object* of hope, "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled," &c. And He who had "begotten them again," or regenerated them to this lively hope, was God. In short, St Peter blesses God for preparing an inheritance in heaven for such Christians as are kept by His power through faith unto salvation; and for revealing to them the foundation on which they may confidently rest their expectation of it, the resurrection of Christ; and, finally, according to the order of end and means, that He had regenerated them to a lively expectation of obtaining the inheritance.

§ 12. Regeneration, the immediate effect of which was "a lively hope," was from "the *abundant mercy* of God" principally in three respects. In the first place, mercy prepared the blessing hoped for; secondly, mercy afforded the pledge, which is contained in the gospel; and, thirdly, mercy bestowed the principle which is begotten in the heart. And in each of these respects it is "abundant." The blessing is of inestimable worth; an inherit-

* 1 Pet. i. 3. † Ver. 3–5.

ance, a kingdom, an eternal weight of glory. The pledge is inconceivably precious, the Son of God in His humiliation and exaltation, accompanied with the ordinances, the promises, and the oath of that God who cannot lie. And the principle is abundantly efficacious, when the mind contemplates the blessings and the pledge, the object and the foundation, to beget in it a lively, vigorous hope, that maketh not ashamed; unto which hope the soul is thus regenerated.

§ 13. According to his Lordship's interpretation, however, these expressions, "begotten again unto a lively hope," *relate to baptism!* True indeed, a man may be said, figuratively, to be born of water, or regenerated by water, into a relation to God and Christ, and His Church, to new privileges and obligations. True indeed, baptism is a sign and seal of the New Testament; but are not millions of human beings regenerated in this figurative sense, without a "lively hope?" Were not many adult converts actually possessed of it *before* they were baptized? Did they not, previous to their baptism, contemplate the object and the basis of their expectation, which excited in them a "lively hope?" Did they not profess, as candidates for baptism, that they had renounced, as well as that they would continue to renounce, all earthly and sensual expectations inconsistent with that blessed hope which they possessed? And as to baptized infants, how can they be said, without perverting the use of language, to be regenerated by baptism to a lively hope? They have no knowledge of those objects and foundations whereby this hope is excited; and are as destitute of Christian hope as of Christian knowledge, of faith in Christ, or of the fear and love of God? That they are capable of regeneration, indeed, is admitted, as well as of remission, justification, holiness of nature, and heavenly blessedness; and we reflect with pleasure, that the Holy Scriptures afford many encouraging intimations relative to the salvation of dying infants, whether baptized or not. Though they have no hope, we have hope concerning them.

§ 14. "Dead in sins, and quickened together with Christ."* These expressions, his Lordship asserts, relate also to baptism. Let the context be examined, that peradventure baptism may be found:—"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were *dead in sins, hath quickened*

* Eph. ii. 5.

us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."* The same spiritual and sublime strain is continued to the end of the chapter; but in what one part of the context there is an allusion to baptism, I am at a loss to conjecture. Let us then examine the words first quoted, where, if in any part, we may expect to find it. Here is, first, two states contrasted—"dead in sin," and "quickened together with Christ;" secondly, an allusion to the resurrection of Christ, whereby He was quickened, or His humanity raised from death to a heavenly life; thirdly, the agent quickening us from a state of sin is God. But where is baptism?

§ 15. It is obvious that the two states are intended as a contrast. As the former state, therefore, is that of sinful death, the latter must intend that of holy life. The contrast to death is life, and the contrast to sin is holiness; not relative, but real. The contrast to that relative holiness to which baptism introduces the subject, was a relative uncleanness. But will any one pretend that to be "dead in sins" means to be "common or unclean" in an outward and merely relative sense, as the Gentiles were compared with the Jews, or as unbelievers are compared with professing Christians? Surely to be "dead in trespasses and sins," must be something very different from being "unbaptized;" and, consequently, to be "quickened" from that state, must be something different from being "baptized."

§ 16. How the allusion contained in the words to the resurrection of Christ can befriend baptismal regeneration, is next to be considered. It will be found on impartial reflection, I believe, that a Christian cannot be said to be "quickened with Christ" any other way than by Divine influence, in virtue of a vital union with Christ our Divine Head of influence, and by faith in Him who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification. To suppose that being "born of water" *makes* us alive to

* Eph. ii. 4-10.

God, or *begets* faith in the subject, has not a ray of evidence, either from Scripture testimony, from observed fact, or from rational analogy; and to imagine that a spiritual principle of life is the *immediate effect* of being baptized, is about as congruous as to imagine that a substance is the immediate effect of a shadow! For what is baptism but a shadowy representation of that which is spiritual, as the sacramental supper is of the body and blood of Christ?

§ 17. The author of this change is God, who is rich in mercy, and great in love. But is it probable, that the richness of His mercy, and the greatness of His love towards us, should be so emphatically extolled by the baptismal rite? Is it not rather as improbable as that the same attributes should be commended by the rite of circumcision, or the ordinance of the Lord's supper? Might we not, in short, with as great propriety exclaim, How rich the genius, and how great the wisdom of Sir Christopher Wren, who has given us a *model* of St Paul's! It is somewhat more natural, I humbly submit, to connect the genius and skill with the grand structure itself, than with the model. Rich grace and great love are indeed manifest in an immortal soul being quickened into a moral and spiritual life, in giving us a Saviour and raising Him from the dead, by virtue of which favour we may by faith reckon ourselves "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God;" but the positive rite that represents this derives its value by reflection, rather than communicates the substance. When it can be proved that the sun derives his splendour from the moon, then, and not before, can it be proved that baptismal regeneration communicates quickening grace.

§ 18. "Buried with Christ in baptism."* Here, indeed, we find baptism, but in what expression shall we find the idea of spiritual blessings being communicated by it? Perhaps the context may furnish something *like* it:—"And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."† In this passage we learn, in the first place, that persons interested in the exalted Saviour have a

* Col. ii. 12. † Ver. 10-12.

complete acceptance in Him. In the next place, we learn that those who are so interested have a complete substitute for the circumcision which was abolished,—a substitute both internal and external,—since they had internally that which the literal circumcision represented, and which is called "circumcision made without hands"—viz., the circumcision of the heart by the power of grace; and they had externally the ordinance of baptism, called "the circumcision of Christ"—an ordinance appointed by Christ in the room of circumcision. Thirdly, we find that the external substitute for circumcision required of them conformity to Christ in whom they were complete. They were required, for instance, to part with sin, not merely the mutilation of a member, but the whole body of it—to divest themselves of it as a man puts off a vile garment, to wear it no more for ever; and this body of carnality they were required not only to crucify, but also to bury with Christ, who was "put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." As Christ was "delivered for our offences" to death and the grave, so they were "required to reckon themselves dead indeed unto sin." They were also required by their baptism to rise with Christ into a life resembling His—a new, a spiritual, a heavenly life, into which their baptism was a significant ceremonial initiation. In the fourth place, these words inform us that this new life, which was both signified and required by baptism, was actually entered upon by faith—"through the faith of the operation of God."

§ 19. Let the candid and sound critic now determine whether this passage was intended by St Paul to convey the notion of water-baptism *communicating* spiritual blessings, rather than significantly representing, and requiring of the baptized to put off the whole body of sin, to bury it for ever, to rise with Christ by faith, and to live a holy life to the glory of God. The apostle's design was evidently to counteract the Judaising teachers, who pleaded for the importance of circumcision. In prosecution of that design, he shews that they ought to part with that rite, because the end of it was answered. The ancient circumcision had an important meaning; in Christians that meaning was accomplished, because they were virtually circumcised with the "circumcision not made with hands." The phrase "not made with hands," which occurs repeatedly in the New Testament, always denotes the spiritual reality of something adumbrated; and "the circumcision

of Christ," or what was instituted by Him in the room of circumcision, could not, in the nature of the case, communicate, but only represent and require the renunciation and burial of the old man of sin, and a new life of faith in Christ. And this faith was of "the operation of God," not "the immediate effect of baptism." The notion of baptism communicating "a lively hope" has been before considered; and the same arguments will prove that baptism does not communicate "the faith of the operation of God," by which believers are risen with Christ.

§ 20. "Born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible." * His Lordship asserts that *these* words relate to baptism. The leading position is, that *regeneration means baptism;* and as "born again" is synonymous with "regenerated," baptism must be intended. The words are found in connexion as follows:—"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being *born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible,* by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." † These Christians had obeyed the truth; this obedience was through, or by the assistance of, the Spirit; the effect of this obedience was the purification of their souls, and the love of the brethren, which they were called upon to cultivate. In order to enforce this duty more powerfully, they are reminded that they were regenerated; and lest there should be any mistake respecting the *kind* of regeneration intended, they are told it was that which was derived from an incorruptible seed—the word of God. Now, is it possible for an attentive and impartial mind to suppose that the apostle meant "born of water," or the regeneration of baptism? On what principle can such an opinion be founded? Does it not appear with a noon-day plainness that he designs that regeneration which takes place on the reception of God's testimony, and which consists in the exercise of faith and love? That "new man" which consists in knowledge and other Christian graces is formed by the union of a gracious principle with Divine truth: the soul is regenerated, properly speaking, by the Spirit, but the body of Christian graces requires for its formation the word of truth, before either knowledge, faith, love, hope, fear, and the like, can have existence: baptismal water is corruptible seed, but "the word of our God abideth for ever."

* 1 Pet. i. 23. † Ver. 22, 23.

§ 21. "Baptism doth now *save us*, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." * These expressions, in their detached form, undoubtedly carry a *semblance* of proof in favour of his Lordship's interpretation; but the words with which they stand connected entirely deprive him even of that semblance:—"Once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." † It is obvious that St Peter institutes a comparison between the unbelieving inhabitants before the deluge, and those who reject the gospel, on the one hand; and between believing Noah with his family, and professing Christians, on the other: the rejectors of God's testimony, in both cases, were the objects of Divine displeasure; but those who believed and obeyed this testimony were objects of the Divine approbation and care. The water of the deluge formed a separation between two dispensations; and so does that of baptism. But we are expressly told that "by faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." ‡ He was a partaker of saving faith, righteousness, and true holiness, *before* he was saved by water. Consequently, his being preserved in the ark related only to God's external dispensation towards him; he was delivered from that calamity which Divine judgment brought upon the unbelieving and disobedient, in *consequence* of his being "found righteous in his generation." In like manner believing Jews and Gentiles entered into the Christian Church, (typified by the ark,) that they might escape the righteous judgment of God which awaited professed unbelievers, and God sealed to them by baptism His new covenant. Christ's obedience, as our substitute, was sealed by His blood and death; but His testamentary grant of privileges and blessings to be enjoyed on gospel terms, is both signified and sealed by the institution of baptism. A seal affixed to a will is designed to certify that it is the real testament of him who seals it.

§ 22. But it is very observable, how particularly the apostle cautions us against the inference of *water*-baptism effecting our

* 1 Pet. iii. 21. † 1 Pet. iii. 20, 21. ‡ Heb. xi. 7.

salvation, as if aware that some might be disposed to form such conclusion :—"Not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God." The spiritual salvation is secured to us not by the external rite, but by a conscientious regard to God's covenant, of which that rite is the sign and seal. Not the *profession* of repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, which was expected to be made by the candidate, but the godly sincerity of that profession. A hypocrite might be admitted to the Church, as Ham was admitted into the ark; but as the ark and the deluge made no one partaker of spiritual salvation who was destitute of it before, so neither does the baptismal institution. In short, St Peter seems, from the whole drift of his discourse, to shew the obligation of professing Christians to answer the design of their initiation into the gospel dispensation; and this they were to do by "sanctifying the Lord God in their hearts," by being "ready always to give an answer to every man that asked them a reason of the hope that was in them" with meekness and reverential fear, and by having "a good conscience toward God." The "resurrection of Jesus Christ" was the *basis* both of their hope and of their baptismal confession.

§ 23. "According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."* His Lordship asserts that these words also relate to baptism, as an act essential to the character of a Christian, and of such importance that it is declared to be instrumental to our salvation. St Paul, writing to Titus, observes :—"We ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, (*καὶ*,) *even* the renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."† In this passage we observe, first, the deep depravity of mankind, Paul and Timothy not excepted, before their conversion to Christianity; secondly, that the remedy for so great an evil was provided by the loving-kindness of God our Saviour, to the exclusion of all human works; thirdly, that we are saved, or made per-

* Tit. iii. 5. † Tit. iii. 3–7.

sonally partakers of new-covenant blessings, according to the mercy of God,—not only the preparation being made by Divine love, and announced in the gospel, but also the application of the remedy being effected by the merciful act of God; fourthly, that the change itself produced is compared to the washing of a new-born infant; lastly, that the cleansing which belongs to, and is performed upon one "born again," is the renewal of the soul by the Holy Ghost. The washing with water belongs to the natural birth, the renewing of the Holy Ghost belongs to the spiritual birth; and this is allusively expressed "the washing of regeneration."

§ 24. So far is this text from countenancing the notion of baptism being called "regeneration," and of its being "instrumental to our salvation," that there does not appear, on fair examination, even an *allusion* to baptism. It is well known that the conjunction (*καὶ*) is often used exegetically for *even*, or *namely;* and the nature of the subject requires it to be so taken in this connexion: since, as I have already shewn, we cannot admit, without affronting the general tenor of Scripture, that God, according to His mercy, saves us by baptism,—or that an external rite is an essential part of our salvation,—or that the spiritual renovation is an immediate effect of it. And supposing the apostle meant to express baptism by the periphrasis "the washing of regeneration," how much more natural the idea, that he designed the thing signified rather than the sign itself; for the mercy of God, according to which we are saved, is manifested incomparably more by the former than by the latter. Thus, whether the term (*καὶ*) be used in a connective or an explanatory way, it does not follow that baptism is instrumental to our salvation. For, if "regeneration" be taken for "being born of God," or "born of the Spirit," or "born from above," the "*renewing* of the Holy Ghost" may well express *progressive* sanctifying influence.

§ 25. Once more, we are told by his Lordship, that the following words declare baptism to be "instrumental to our salvation:"—"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* Supposing "the kingdom of God" to mean the visible Christian Church, we admit that no one can, according to the appointed rule, enter into it without being "born of water," or baptized: but if we understand by it the heavenly state, or future

* John iii. 3.

happiness in another world, is it probable, is it conceivable, that our Lord should mean that no one can see it without *baptism?* Is it more probable, or even more conceivable, than the sentiment, that no one has spiritual life except he *literally* "eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man?" And yet men of great name have espoused this last-mentioned tenet. If, however, the phrase "born again" be understood to signify a *spiritual* change, no difficulty remains; as it is at once rational, and perfectly conformable to other inspired declarations:—"Without *holiness* no man shall see the Lord;" "Blessed are the *pure in heart*, for they shall see God;" "If any man have not the *spirit of Christ*, he is none of his." Besides, Nicodemus needed not to be told, that the baptismal purification was an ordinance of initiation into the Christian community; that being a matter of public notoriety, and a subject of conversation among the Jews: but there was great need of his being informed that this *alone* was not sufficient; that a man must be also "born again," or "from above;" "born of the Spirit."

§ 26. We concur with his Lordship when he states, that Christians have "a *double birth*, namely, a natural birth from Adam, and a spiritual birth from Christ. There cannot be two natural births, neither can there be two spiritual births. There cannot be two first entrances into a natural life, neither can there be two first entrances into a spiritual life. There cannot be a second baptism, or a second regeneration."* And we cordially agree with Bishop Pearson, to whose words Bishop Tomline alludes, when he says, "A double birth there is, and the world consists of two, the first and the second man. And though the incorruptible seed be the word of God, and the dispensers of it in some sense may say, as St Paul spake unto the Corinthians, 'I have begotten you through the gospel;' yet he is the true Father whose word it is, and that is God, even 'the Father of light, who of His own will begat us with the word of truth.' Thus 'whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God;' which *regeneration* is as it were a second creation: 'for we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.' And He alone who did create us out of nothing, can beget us again, and make us of the new creation. Hence hath He the name of Father, and they of sons who are born of Him; and so from that internal act of

* Refutation, p. 85.

spiritual regeneration another title of paternity redoundeth unto the Divinity. Nor is this the only second birth or sole regeneration in a Christian sense; the soul, which after its natural being requires a birth into the life of grace, is also after that *born again* into a life of glory. Our Saviour puts us in mind of *the regeneration*, 'when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory.' The resurrection of our bodies is a kind of coming out of the womb of the earth, and entering upon immortality, a nativity into another life."*

§ 27. To be "born of God" is a second birth, and a second birth is surely regeneration: but "he that *believeth* that Jesus is the Christ is born of God;" and therefore is *regenerated*, according to the plain testimony of Scripture. Now according to the same testimony, adult converts were required to believe that Jesus is the Christ *before* they were baptized; and the apostles consequently baptized them as regenerated persons; for, as believers, they were born of God. This is a plain fact, that appears on the face of the Christian history, and pervades the whole spirit and design of the Christian dispensation; and with this before him, let the impartial inquirer determine, whether "the word regeneration is in Scripture *solely* and *exclusively* applied to the one *immediate effect of baptism* once administered."

§ 28. As the Holy Scriptures, in the rational estimation of Protestants, are the rule of faith and practice, to the exclusion of the decisions of ecclesiastical councils and fathers, and as we have the sacred text in at least equal purity with what the Church had in their days, it is of little moment to us how they interpreted the text. They were as liable to err as those who succeed them; they had the same source of fallibility, and in many respects their advantages were inferior to our own. It may be worth while, however, briefly to examine whether this assertion be perfectly correct —viz., that the ancient Christians "*never* use the word regenerate or born again, but that they mean or denote by it baptism:" and, in other words, that "regeneration in the language of the fathers *constantly* signifies the participation of the sacrament of baptism."

§ 29. Clemens of Alexandria, speaking of a woman of suspicious virtue, and alluding to the words of Scripture, "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth," observes, that "she lives indeed

* Pearson on the Creed, Art. i., p. 27, 4th Edit.

in sin, but is dead to the Divine commands: but becoming penitent, as if *born again* by conversion, she has the *regeneration* of life. The old offender indeed is dead, but she who has *a birth by repentance* has entered into life again." * Eusebius applies the term *regeneration* to the renovation of the *world* at the last day; † and Basil the Great employs it in the same way, when, in reference to the Stoics, he observes, that they introduce an unlimited number of corruptions and *renovations* (or *regenerations*) of the world.‡ St Augustine, alluding to Matt. xix. 28, (ἐν τῇ παλιγγενεσίᾳ,) *in the regeneration*, remarks, that our Lord intends, doubtless, in this place, by *regeneration*, the final *resurrection*; § and we find expressions to the same purpose in different parts of his works. The word *regeneration* is employed in a similar manner by Origen, Jerome, and Bernard. Theophylact, explaining our Lord's expression, Matt. xix., says expressly, "understand by *regeneration*, the resurrection." ‖ And Theophanes, paraphrasing the same words, says, "Ye shall be rewarded in the general resurrection; which He called *regeneration*, as it *begets us anew*, and restores us into our pristine state." ¶ The same writer again observes elsewhere, that the "*resurrection* is a restoration to our primitive state, which we expect to obtain in the *regeneration*, by the favour of Him who has renewed us by Himself, and has endowed our nature with incorruption." ** Thus also Dionysius the Areopagite, discoursing on the future perfect state of the saints, remarks, that "holy souls, which in the present state are liable to failures, shall *in the regeneration* be transformed to a state of immutability and of complete conformity to God." †† Epiphanius, speaking of the Supreme Artificer, in allusion to prophetic language, under the character of a potter, observes, that "it behoved Him to take care of the vessel formed by His own hand; and though, on account

* Ἀναγεννηθεισα παλιγγενεσίαν κατα μετανοιαν γεννηθεισης.—*Clem. Alex. Strom.*, lib. ii.

† Των ὅλων παλιγγενεσιαν.—*Euseb. Prepar. Evang.*, lib. xv., cap. 11.

‡ Ἀπειρους φθορας κόσμου και παλιγγενεσιας.—*Basil. Mag.*, Hom. iii. in Hexaëm.

§ "Regeneratione hoc loco, ambigente nullo, novisimam resurrectionem vocat." —*Aug. Ep. ad Pelag.*, lib. iii., cap. 3.

‖ Παλιγγενεσιαν, την ἀναστασιν νύει.—*Theoph. in Matt.* xix.

¶ Ἡν παλιγγενεσίαν εκαλεθεν, ὡς αὐθις ἀναγεινωσαν ἡμας.—*Theoph.*, Hom. xli.

** Ἡν και ἡμεις ἀπεκδεχομεθα ἐν τη παλιγγενεσια λαβειν.—Hom. xxxiv.

†† Ἐν τη παλιγγενεσια.—Dionys. Areop. de Hier. Eccl., cap. vii.

of its being vitiated through disobedience, it was meet to turn it into its original mass of clay, yet *in the regeneration*, He should restore the vessel, by a resurrection, to its ancient brightness and beauty." * Basil of Cæsarea, speaking of scornful philosophers, says, "They laugh at us inordinately when we tell them of the end of this world and *the regeneration of life*," † or a future period of existence. Athanasius:—"*In the regeneration* we shall all rise as one man." ‡ Isidore of Pelusium observes, "I could shew from all the sacred writings that the affairs of the Jews are brought to an end, and shall have no *regeneration*." §

§ 30. That the term (*παλιγγενεσία*) *regeneration* is often used by the Greek fathers, in a figurative sense, for baptism, is undeniable; but the preceding quotations are sufficient to shew what reliance is to be placed upon the assertions, that "the word *regeneration* is in Scripture *solely* and *exclusively* applied to the one immediate effect of baptism once administered,"—"*regeneration, as often as* it is used in the Scripture books, signifies the baptismal regeneration,"—"regeneration in the language of the fathers *constantly* signifies participation of the sacrament of baptism." The Greek fathers use another term (*ἀναγέννησις*) which literally answers to *regeneration* in the same way as the former,—viz., to express, figuratively, the ordinance of baptism,—but not "solely and exclusively." Thus Gregory Nazianzen, in allusion to the Holy Spirit, says, that "He effects the *spiritual regeneration*." ‖ St Chrysostom assigns the reason why the term *regeneration* is applied to baptism: "Because baptism is said to be a *sign* of death and resurrection, therefore it is called regeneration." ¶ Cyril of Jerusalem, speaking of Christ's resurrection and ascension, says, "On the fortieth day after His *regeneration* from the dead, He ascended to the Jerusalem above." **

* Ἵνα αὐθις ἐν τη παλιγγενεσια ἀνασκευαση τὸ ἄγγος ἐν τη ἀναστασει.—*Epiph., Heres.*, xxxvii.

† Περι συντελειας του κοσμου τουτου και παλιγγενεσιας αἰῶνος.—*Basil. Cæsar.*, Hom. i. in Hexaëm.

‡ Ἐν τη παλιγγενεσια ὥς εἰς ἄνθρωπος ἀπανιστάμεθα.—*Athan.*, quest. xxiv ad Antioch.

§ Και παλιγγενεσιαν οὐχ ἑξει.—*Isid. Pelus.*, lib. iv., epist. 17.

‖ Δημιουργει τεν πνευματικην ἀναγεννησιν.—*Greg. Naz.*, orat. xliv.

¶ Ἐπει και θανατου και ἀναστασεως συμβολον λεγεται εἶναι το βαπτισμα διὸ και ἀναγεννησις καλειται.—*Chrysost. in Joh.* iii.

** Μετα τεσσαρακοντα ἡμερας τῆς ἐκ νεκρων ἀναγεννήσεως εἰς την ἄνω Ἱερουσαλημ ἀνεληλυθε.—*Cyril. Jeros. Orat. de Simone., Biblioth. Patrum.*, tom. xiii.

§ 31. On the whole, it appears abundantly evident, that the term regeneration is used by the inspired and ecclesiastical writers to express *any great change*, whether mental or corporeal, physical or supernatural, where any resemblance is discovered between that change and a birth; and as baptism is a *sign* of entering out of the world into the Church, and out of a sinful into a holy state, it became customary to express that great change by *regeneration*. But surely a *gracious change* from a death in sin to a life in righteousness is great, whether it take place on believing before baptism, or after; and for calling such a change regeneration, the Calvinists have sufficient reason, not only on the ground of Scripture usage, but also that of the fathers. The frequent use of it, too, in reference to baptism, being calculated to convey false notions of a positive institute, they are fully justified in using it very sparingly in that connexion, but more emphatically to express a spiritual change, as a change of infinitely greater moment; especially considering the proneness of mankind to content themselves with a form of godliness, while denying the power. If at any time, again, it be taken, in popular language, for *conversion*, this also, it must be admitted, is a great change, resembling a birth. And is it not of incomparably greater moment to convince men that without repentance, faith, and conversion, they cannot see the kingdom of God, than to convince them that without baptism they cannot be saved? Why should so much earnestness be used in urging a matter of such easy acquisition, nay, in urging the importance of what is already performed upon millions who are nevertheless "in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity?" In theological discussions the Calvinists sufficiently distinguish between the two great changes, regeneration and conversion; and even if in popular addresses they were occasionally to confound them, a little inaccuracy in the rigid use of terms may surely be overlooked, where earnestness, zeal, and benevolent exertions are employed in promoting the everlasting welfare of mankind.

Section II.

The Bishop's avowed Sentiments on Justification *examined.*

§ 1. Importance of the doctrine. § 2. His Lordship's views of justification stated. § 3, 4. That it is conveyed by baptism, examined. § 5. The Church of England supposes candidates for baptism to be in a justified state. § 6. The Eleventh Article and Homily on Justification against the Bishop. § 7. Justifying faith productive of good works. § 8. These justify our faith, as evidence. § 9–11. St Paul's doctrine of justification. § 12–14. Also St James's. § 15–19. That justification is lost and recovered successively, examined. § 20–22. The true ground of the *imputation* of righteousness. § 23–25. What the condition of *continuance* in justification. § 26. The difference between the justification of a *person*, and that of his *actions*.

§ 1. The doctrine of a sinner's justification before God, in the character of a holy and righteous judge, is of importance to men, in proportion as the knowledge of the way to happiness is conducive to its enjoyment: and to an intelligent being, who is required to "seek the Lord while He may be found,"—to "come before the Lord" with a suitable offering,—and to "work out his own salvation with fear and trembling,"—it is, beyond all question, of the greatest moment to know the divinely-appointed method of pardon and acceptance. Accordingly we find, that when any remarkable revival of real religion has taken place in the Christian Church, from its foundation to the present time, the minds of men have been powerfully impressed with the importance of this doctrine. It is a clear fact, that every extensive reformation has given it peculiar prominence, and that those who have opposed the work in a mass, have directed much of their opposition against the doctrine of justification by faith. Not to mention other instances, those of Paul and his inspired associates, and of Luther, with his ablest coadjutors in the Reformation, are striking examples. St Paul directs the full force of his holy reasoning and eloquence to establish the point of justification by grace, through faith, to the exclusion of everything else, though careful to inculcate the necessity of good works and holy obedience on another ground; and Luther, who had entered far into the views and experience of the apostle, dwelt much on justification by faith to the exclusion

of works, both from the pulpit and the press. As the former, again, was virulently opposed by the Jewish advocates for good works, so was the latter by the Popish hierarchy, who pretended great concern for the cause of religion and the purity of the Catholic faith. In a word, it was not without reason that Luther, speaking on the point of justification, termed it, *Articulus stantis vel cadentis Ecclesiæ*, a doctrine intimately connected with either the welfare or the ruin of the Christian Church.

§ 2. The Bishop of Lincoln has published his views of this Christian doctrine in a manner sufficiently explicit, and I shall give him credit for not being displeased with a candid examination of those views. His Lordship maintains that baptism conveys justification,—that faith without good works will not justify,—that simply to profess faith in the Trinity, and to promise future obedience, is sufficient for justification. His assertions, on the first of these points, are:—"Baptism, administered according to the appointed form to a true believer, would *convey justification;* or, in other words, the baptized person would receive remission of his past sins, would be reconciled to God, and be accounted just and righteous in His sight.—*Baptism* would not only wash away the guilt of all his former sins, both original and actual, and *procure* to him *acceptance with God*, but it would also communicate a portion of Divine grace, to counteract the depravity of his nature, and to strengthen his good resolutions.—*Baptism* was invariably the instrument, or external form, by which *justification was conveyed.*" * "It is the doctrine of our Church that baptism duly administered *confers justification.*" †

§ 3. The sentiment that baptism washes away the guilt of sin and communicates grace has been examined before. We have now to consider its efficacy to convey *justification.* The expression itself is remarkable, "would *convey* justification." Elsewhere his Lordship very properly observes, "Justification is a forensic term —to be justified before God, signifies to be *declared* and accounted as just and righteous in His sight." ‡ Justification, then, is an *act* or declaration of God respecting a person; for, as St Paul observes, "It is God that justifieth." To baptize is an act of man; but how the act of man can *convey* a future act of God it is difficult to conceive. The prophets and apostles "conveyed" to the people, as a matter of testimony, what God had done, or was about to

* Refutation, pp. 132, 133. † Ibid., p. 147. ‡ Ibid., p. 98.

do ; but when they performed miracles, or when miraculous effects *followed* certain acts or declarations of theirs, there would be, I conceive, no propriety in saying that the appointed sign *conveyed* the effect. Even supposing baptism were invariably followed by justification as a consequent, it would be an erroneous mode of expression to say that the former *conveyed* the latter. And if it be said that not the act of God is conveyed, but the privilege resulting from that act, then it is not justification itself, according to his Lordship's own definition of it, but some other idea to which the term is vaguely applied. This, however, is of small moment compared with the sentiment here controverted.

§ 4. His Lordship requires that baptism be "administered according to the *appointed* form." Here it is but an act of justice, not to say liberality, to suppose, that "the appointed form" refers not to human but Divine legislation ; not to any "form" drawn up and enjoined by men, but to that which is contained in the New Testament. It would be reflecting unmerited reproach on his Lordship's character, to suppose he insinuates, that none can administer baptism according to the form appointed in the New Testament, but those who administer it according to the form contained in the Book of Common Prayer. Let it, however, be in any "form" his Lordship pleases. It is of greater moment, in the present argument, that he supposes the adult candidate for baptism to be "a true believer ;" a requisition which, of course, excludes all hypocritical pretenders from a participation of spiritual blessings communicated by the ordinance. Let us now, with his Lordship, "suppose a person to have been educated as a Jew or a heathen, and suppose him—which was the case of every Jew and every heathen—to have been guilty of a variety of sins ; and suppose him, by attending to the evidences of the truth of the gospel, to have been convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, the promised Saviour of the world ; such a person could not but feel contrition for the wickedness of his past life, and be anxious to avoid the punishment to which he was liable."* It is not our province to say, Here he must stop, until he is baptized. No : many, very many, among "Jews and heathens," upon hearing revealed truth, have gone much further. There are many Christians who regard the baptism of infants as unscriptural, and of course their children grow up under Christian instruction, and attend the public minis-

* Refutation, p 132.

try of the word, while unbaptized. We may then suppose, what fact has often verified, that an unbaptized hearer of the gospel is brought to feel deep contrition on account of his sins; to be truly penitent, so as to hate all sin; sincerely to deny himself, to take up his cross, to "pluck out the right eye, and cut off the right hand" that offend; to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as the only and all-sufficient Saviour; to trust in Him for salvation, as the Prophet, Priest, and King of His Church; to believe with the heart unto righteousness; and to confess with the mouth unto salvation; to obey from the heart the heavenly call, and to resolve, by the assistance of Divine grace, to render unreserved obedience to what God's word requires. We suppose this person not yet baptized, but only a candidate for baptism. He is not yet "born of water;" but is he *therefore* not "born of the Spirit?" In the face of so much evidence, so many merciful declarations, that God will pardon the penitent, accept the returning sinner, justify him that believeth in Jesus; who shall affirm, that this man lies in the pollution of sin, and under the load of guilt; that he is not accepted, but condemned, though he has fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before him; and that he is in this dreadful situation *because* he is not baptized, though made willing in the day of God's power to submit to every ordinance of Divine appointment! One might think it impossible, not to say for a Christian divine, but for any one reading the Scriptures, unattended with corrupt glosses, with a sincere desire to be rightly informed, to harbour any such thought.

§ 5. It is further asserted by his Lordship, that "it is the doctrine of our Church, that baptism duly administered *confers justification*." I hope this assertion is made through inadvertence, for the credit of the Church by law established. Were this clearly proved, it would be a strong argument with all unprejudiced men to leave its communion. Any Church whatever, advancing an opinion so contrary to Scripture, to piety, and the plain dictates of reason, would prove itself corrupt in no small degree: and with regard to the Church of England I would beg leave to say, that in proportion as it approaches to the sentiment ascribed to it, so will be the evidence that it is but partially reformed from the superstitions of the dark ages. In the Church Catechism, in reply to the question, "What is required of persons to be baptized?" it is said, "Repentance, whereby they forsake sin; and faith, whereby they

steadfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that sacrament." Are not the persons who really possess these qualifications pardoned as penitent, and justified as believers, *before* they are baptized? In one of the homilies, entitled "Of good works annexed unto faith," a quotation from Chrysostom is introduced: —"I can shew a man that by faith without works lived, and came to heaven; but without faith never man had life. The thief, that was hanged when Christ suffered, did believe only, and the most merciful God *justified* him." Had he lived to receive baptism, would his justification have been deferred, until that rite "conferred" it? Or, if baptism be the appointed mode of "conveying" or "confirming" justification, what right have those who hold that sentiment to conclude that this person *was* justified? If it be said that he gave sufficient evidence of repentance and faith, so do thousands of converts, in like manner, *before* they are admitted into the visible and explicit communion of Christians by baptism. What is done prior to that transaction certainly cannot be the effect of it.

§ 6. "Faith without good works will not justify." This is his Lordship's avowed sentiment, and these are his words:—"Neither in our Articles, nor in our Liturgy, is it said that faith without *good works* will justify." * "Let it be remarked that whenever St Paul, in speaking of justification, uses the words 'works' or 'deeds' he invariably adds 'of the law;'" "he frequently says a man is not justified by the works of the law, but not once does he say a man is not justified by works."† It is of little moment what the Articles and the Liturgy say, any further than they are consistent with Scripture and the analogy of Divine dispensations. And as the compilers were men of like passions with ourselves, however learned, or pious, or desirous of stating the real truth, their successors have an equal right to bring their statements to the test as they had respecting those of their predecessors. It is, however, expressly stated in the eleventh Article, "We are justified *only* for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, *without* our *own works* or deservings." The Article cannot mean our *bad* works, which would be absurd; and as all our works are either good or bad, the meaning must be without our own *good* works. In the Liturgy, it is said that God "pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly *repent* and unfeignedly *believe* in His holy gospel."

* Refutation, p. 155. † Ibid., p. 120.

Now as God never pardoneth and absolveth any who are not at the same time justified, it is clear that true repentance and unfeigned faith, without good works, in the estimation of the Church, justify. The Homily on Justification, to which the eleventh Article refers, observes :—"The true understanding of this doctrine, we be justified freely by faith without works, or that we be justified by faith in Christ *only*, is not that this our *own act* to believe in Christ, or this our *faith* in Christ, which is within us, doth justify us, and deserve our justification unto us ; we must renounce the merit of all virtues and good deeds, which we either have done, shall do, or can do, as things that be far too weak, and insufficient, and imperfect, to deserve remission of our sins, and our justification ; and, therefore, we must trust only in God's mercy, and that sacrifice which our High Priest and Saviour Christ Jesus, the Son of God, once offered for us upon the cross, to obtain thereby God's grace and remission." Here two things are maintained : first, that the converted sinner is justified by faith in Christ *only*, or freely by faith without works, and consequently *good works*, for no one ever supposed that bad works can justify ; and, secondly, that faith itself, as well as all virtues and good deeds, are renounced in point of *merit* for justification.

§ 7. Let the reader now reflect what reliance ought to be placed upon this assertion—"Neither in our Articles, nor in our Liturgy, is it said that faith without good works will justify." That the expressions of "faith only," and "faith without works," were not intended to exclude the necessity of works for *other* purposes we freely allow ; but if words have any meaning, they were intended to exclude them, however good, in the point of justification. We also maintain that a true and lively faith is *productive* of good works, as a good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and that its character may be best known to us by its effects ; but surely, as a cause is distinct from its effects, as a good tree differs from its fruits, and a principle in the mind from its operations, so a *good faith* is a different thing from *good works*, and therefore should neither be identified nor confounded. But though Calvinists avoid this, they are in the constant habit of insisting that a fruitless faith is not saving. They urge the importance of good works on several accounts, for they know that God requires universal obedience,—that they are well pleasing to God,—that Christians are justified and renewed, in order that they may walk in them unto all pleas-

ing,—that they are profitable unto men,—that Christ is the author of eternal salvation to them that obey Him,—and that they are bound, in duty and in gratitude, to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded. They reprobate with warmth a dead faith, and inculcate with earnestness "charity, and all other virtues and good deeds," as indispensable towards forming the Christian character.

§ 8. That good works *justify* the goodness of faith, and of the Christian character, by way of evidence to ourselves and others, is not denied, as good fruit is an evidence of a good tree. "By their fruits ye shall *know* them." A true Christian is engrafted into Christ in a higher and far more important sense than by baptism, or an outward profession. By faith they abide in Him the true vine, and thence they derive their sap and fruitfulness. They are taught by experience, as well as by Scripture, that except they abide in Christ by faith, they cannot glorify God by bringing forth much fruit; yea, that they "can do nothing,"—nothing that deserves the name of Christian obedience or acceptable service. They know that "without faith it is impossible to please God," as well as that the faith which is dead and not productive of holy obedience is unavailable both for salvation hereafter and for justification in this life. Calvinists are persuaded that we should be careful and strenuous to maintain good works, and to discharge all personal and relative duties,—that no sin should have dominion over us,—and that we should have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. They seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, by patient continuance in well-doing.

§ 9. Not once does Paul say, "a man is not justified by works." His Lordship takes it for granted that whenever the apostle mentions the works or deeds "of the law," in speaking of justification, he means the ceremonial works of the law.* But why should this be supposed, since he uses the same expression when the ceremonial law cannot be meant? For of the Gentiles he says, "which shew *the work of the law* written in their hearts."† Besides, was not the moral law included in the Mosaic? And was it not the Mosaic law, consisting of moral and ceremonial precepts, the works of which are excluded from justification? Would St Paul's reasoning have been fairly answered by a Jew pleading that he did not expect to be justified by the works of the ceremonial, but of

* Refutation, p. 120. † Rom. ii. 15.

the moral law? that he devoutly worshipped the true God, observed every moral precept, and performed his duty to God and man? Would not St Paul have replied, "You are still under a mistake; this is not God's way of justifying and saving sinners. It is not by 'works of righteousness which we have done,' whether ceremonial or moral, that He saves, much less justifies, us, but by His grace." It is not merely the *merit* of works—the works of any law, whether of nature or of revelation, whether ceremonial or moral—that the apostle in his reasonings rejects, but also the *performance* of such works, as requisite for justification. A cordial reception of Jesus Christ as the end, the consummation of the law of Moses, for righteousness to every one that believeth, however deficient his own works of righteousness have been, entitles the returning offender to justification of life, by a merciful appointment.

§ 10. His Lordship has hazarded the assertion too hastily, when he says that whenever St Paul, speaking of justification, "uses the words 'works' or 'deeds,' he invariably adds 'of the law.'" For thus the apostle reasons:—"If Abraham were justified by WORKS, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. . . . .To him that *worketh not,* but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness *without* WORKS."* And what he says of salvation is *à fortiori* applicable to justification:—"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of WORKS, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."† "Who hath saved us, [in which *justified* is necessarily included,] and called us with a holy calling, not according to our WORKS, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."‡ "Not by WORKS of *righteousness* which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us."§ From these and similar passages, what can be more evident than the apostle's design to exclude not only the merits of our works, but also our works themselves, *good* works, works of righteousness, from having any part in our justification?

§ 11. That the apostle does not confine his meaning to the

* Rom. iv. 2, 5, 6. † Eph. ii. 8 10. ‡ 2 Tim. i. 9. § Tit. iii. 5.

ceremonial law, when he excludes the works or deeds "of the law" from having any share in justification, or primary acceptance into the Divine favour, is manifest by comparing one part of his discourse with another. "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin."* His argument necessarily requires that the term "law" be used in the same sense in both the propositions. Now will any one suppose that in the latter proposition he means, by the *ceremonial* law is the knowledge of sin? Does he not evidently mean the same law to which St John refers when he says, "Sin is the transgression of *the law?*"—and no one, surely, will pretend that St John means the ceremonial law. St Paul himself says, "The law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression."† "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin but by *the law:* for I had not known lust, [or, concupiscence,] except *the law* had said, Thou shalt not covet."‡ From these passages, among many others, it is obvious, first, that the law by which is the knowledge of sin, is the *moral* rather than the ceremonial, though a breach of the latter, while in force, was also sinful; secondly, that no one is justified by the deeds of this law, or ever shall be,—not by that law which is holy, just, and good,—not by that law which is spiritual, and in which the renewed soul delights, which with his heart he serves, and to which the carnal mind is not subject. Again, the apostle observes, "If there had been a law given which could have given life, [*i.e.*, a title to life, or justification,] verily righteousness would have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe."§ Here, decidedly, every law whatever, and therefore the works or deeds of every law, are excluded from the possibility of giving to fallen man a life of acceptance with God in the point of justification.

§ 12. The apostle James had to do with those who *abused* the doctrine of justification by faith without works. And this abuse consisted, like most other abuses, in drawing false inferences from important truths. If obedience to law, if works of righteousness, be not necessary to justification, but faith only, then how are they necessary at all? If our doings will not justify us, we may content ourselves with being believers without being doers. Nay,

* Rom. iii. 20. † Rom. iv. 15. ‡ Rom. vii. 7. § Gal. iii. 21, 22.

says the apostle, this is a false and pernicious inference; "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." * "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man *say* he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? . . . . Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." † Their plea that they had *faith* was no better than the plea of a barren fig-tree, that it was of a *good* quality, and therefore should not be cut down as a cumberer of the ground, though year after year it produced no good fruit. Their inference was as irrational as if they had said, We did not *obtain* our natural life by eating and drinking; therefore, to partake of food is not necessary to *preserve* life. Far different was the conduct of Abraham, after enjoying the peculiar favour of being accepted through faith. He went on to perform such works as God required of him; and for this his renown is in the Church. "Was not Abraham our father *justified* [*i. e., approved*] by works, [by acts of obedience to the Divine mandate,] when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought [*συνήργει, co-operates*] with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?" That is, [*ἐτελειώθη,*] *made complete,* by attaining its appropriate end, as a good tree by the fruit it bears. The good fruit is the completed end of its good quality. The tree is previously good; but that goodness is crowned, and the evidence of it is perfected, by the fruit appearing. "And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness, [*i. e.,* a righteous act, deserving commendation:] and he was called the Friend of God." ‡ How convincing is this argument against those "filthy dreamers" who infested the Church even in the apostolic age, and more or less ever since, and who held that the "*obedience* of faith" and "*works* of righteousness" were needless, if they could but "say" they had faith.

§ 13. St James's inference, from the above statement, deserves particular notice: — "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, [*i. e., approved,* so as to be commended by the righteous Judge,] and not by faith only." That is, it was not the faith of Abraham *only* that formed his righteous character, on account of which he had the approbation of God and commendation from the Church, but his works also—his works of faith and holy obedience. And this is applicable to every man professing faith in Christ. To

* James i. 22. † James ii. 14, 17. ‡ James ii. 21–23.

boast of justification by faith, when we cannot "shew our faith by our works," is ruinous presumption. The solifidians, whom St James attacks with holy zeal and force of argument, boasted, probably, that Rahab had no *works* to shew, but was justified by faith only, and therefore needed no further care. "Was not Rahab the harlot justified [*i. e., approved*] by *works*, [commendable deeds, as the effects of her faith,] when she had received the messengers, [of God,] and had sent them out another way?" Was not her faith operative? were not these acts the fruit of her belief in the God of Israel, and well-pleasing and acceptable in His estimation? Go ye and do likewise, instead of boasting of a false gift. "For as the body without the spirit [or, breath] is dead, so faith without works [such obedience as God requires] is dead also."* While you discard those things which Christ has commanded, and which God's holy law requires from every rational being, you have but the "dead body" of faith. What have you to do with peace, or a justifying righteousness? You have neither lot nor portion in the privileges of the righteous, who can "shew their faith by their works."

§ 14. His Lordship supposes the meaning of St James to be, that a dead faith was not sufficient for their "*continuance* in a state of justification."† But what evidence can be adduced that a *dead faith* has ever introduced any man into a state of justification? If the mere circumstance of a profession of faith or being baptized introduced them, we must conclude, however absurdly, that Simon Magus was justified, while at the same time he was in "the gall of bitterness, and the bond of iniquity." The assumption, that one kind of faith is required for justification, and another for salvation, is alike unsupported by Scripture and reason,—a distinction invented by Popish ignorance for the sake of giving countenance to the notion of baptism justifying *ex opere operato.* His Lordship says, that "God is pleased to grant remission of all past sins, for the sake of His blessed Son, on account of *faith only;* but He requires from those whom He thus graciously receives into His favour an implicit obedience to His commands in future: if they disobey, the pardon is cancelled, the state of acceptance is forfeited, and liability to punishment ensues."‡ Now, it is natural to ask, is the "faith" on account of which remission of all past sins is granted, and consequently justification, a dead or

* James ii. 24–26. † Refutation, p. 119. ‡ Ibid., p. 124.

a lively faith? If the former, we have the evidence to seek that they ever were justified; and how can that which was never granted be "cancelled?" If the latter, how comes a lively faith not to produce good works, of which they are the appropriate evidence? But on this point his Lordship is still more explicit.

§ 15. We are told that, "as in the case of adult converts from heathenism in the days of the apostles, the state of justification, thus [by repentance and faith] recovered by penitent Christians, does not necessarily remain; its continuance depends upon their abstinence from those sins which are forbidden, and upon the practice of those virtues which are enjoined, in the gospel. By the indulgence of *any* criminal passion, or by the neglect of *any* practicable duty, the state of justification is forfeited, and the offender becomes again liable to the wrath of God. Repentance, therefore, and faith, if sincere, will in all cases *procure* justification; but obedience must be added, to *preserve* the state of justification when obtained."* This, it must be acknowledged, is also the opinion of Bishop Bull, as quoted by his Lordship. Again: —"Adults are not required to perform any good works previous to baptism, but simply to *profess* their faith in the blessed Trinity, and to *promise* future obedience to God's holy will and commandments; they are then *baptized,* and by *this spiritual regeneration* they receive remission of all their former sins, both original and actual. But, from the corruption of his nature, and the enticements of sin, he [the justified person] may afterwards not lead a life agreeable to the precepts of the gospel; and if he dies while he continues an impenitent sinner, he will not be saved, although he had justification in this world."† Dr Waterland, on Justification, seems to regard this as the sentiment of the Church of England.

§ 16. Setting aside names and human authority, as we ought to do, let us calmly examine the sentiment itself. There are two things of primary importance which require our attention: first, whether the justification supposed to be conferred by baptism, on *profession* of faith in the Trinity, and a *promise* of future obedience, be not a gratuitous assumption; and, secondly, whether the difficulty proposed to be obviated by this statement may not be more satisfactorily, that is, more scripturally and rationally, removed on different principles. As to the *first* of these points, what *evidence* is there that adults converted from heathenism, or persons educated

* Refutation, p. 142. † Ibid., p. 143.

among Christians without baptism, are brought into a state of justification before God by simply professing their faith in the Trinity, and promising future obedience, and being baptized? That any churches, whether primitive or modern, have acted on this presumption, can surely be no substantial argument for the rectitude of the sentiment. Primitive practice may be as wrong as modern practice; and if antiquity be a test of truth, there is scarcely an error or absurdity which may not be proved to be true and correct. May not hypocritical pretenders profess faith and promise obedience, nay, be baptized, and introduced to the visible Church? It is true the Church ought, in the judgment of charity, to esteem them as sincere in their profession and promise, and therefore in a justified state, until they give evidence to the contrary; but the omniscient God can be under no such obligation: He sees their insincerity of profession and promise, and that their faith is dead. Surely no one, without contradicting the whole tenor of holy writ, as well as many particular express declarations, can suppose that He approves, accepts, pardons, and justifies, those whom He knows to be insincere; nor can anything be more adverse to Scripture and piety than the notion that baptism was ever designed to sanctify hypocrites, and to render those acceptable to God who were before detested by Him?

§ 17. It is granted that the apostolic writings regard those who were admitted to the Christian Church to be Christians, and partakers of all the benefits of Christianity; but on what ground? Clearly because it was charitably hoped that they believed and promised from a pure principle and a right motive. To be thus *justified*, however, by the fallible opinion of the Church, is no evidence that they are so before God who searcheth the hearts. By Him, such false pretenders both before and after baptism stand condemned; and their being thus introduced to the participation of gospel privileges, and outward communion with the faithful, is so far from lessening their guilt, that it rather enhances their condemnation. Doubtless when they manifest a temper and conduct incompatible with true Christianity, they lose that justification which they had from the good opinion of the Church; but they lose no justification before God, because they were never possessed of any. He saw the rottenness of their heart before it discovered itself to the eyes of men, and that through every stage they were under His righteous condemning sentence. Whether, in any in-

stance a person possessing evangelical sincerity and a living faith, may afterwards lose these estimable qualities, belongs to a totally different question; and the discussion of it in this place would be a premature digression. It may be sufficient to observe here, that if these qualities originate in themselves, they may certainly lose them; but if they are imparted by sovereign mercy, there are many strong reasons for concluding, that the "seed shall remain," and that their faith, however strongly assaulted, "shall not fail."

§ 18. The *second* thing that remains to be considered is, whether the difficulty to be obviated by his Lordship's statement may not be more satisfactorily removed on different principles. His design is, doubtless, to befriend the interests of practical piety. At first view it may appear plausible, that a dread of having our justification before God cancelled, may be a strong barrier against licentiousness; while a persuasion of the contrary opens a wide gate to carelessness: but against this we have several considerations to offer. In the first place, *every sin*, in whatever degree, is displeasing to God; and this displeasure duly apprehended is a far stronger barrier, except with the selfish and unprincipled, who regard the pleasure or displeasure of God as only of secondary consideration. According to the one sentiment, a person will be no further careful to please God, or to avoid sin, than to preserve his justification; according to the other, he has reason to guard against *all sin*, even the smallest. His language in the hour of temptation would be, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" In the next place, if every sin, however comparatively small, forfeits our justification, where in this world shall we find a justified person? For "there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not." "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." A sinful thought is displeasing to God; but does every sinful thought forfeit our justified state? On this theory, the same person may have his justified state renewed and cancelled a hundred times a day! And if we lessen the condition a little, and say, "By the *indulgence* of any criminal passion, or by the neglect of any practicable duty, the state of justification is forfeited, and the offender becomes again liable to the wrath of God;" the inference is easy, that there is no harm in "criminal passion,"—God is not displeased with it, provided only we avoid its *indulgence*. The next clause indeed is more strict, the forfeiture being supposed to be incurred

"by the *neglect* of *any* practicable duty." But then, what can be the tendency of this statement, but either to lower the standard of practicable duty, or to make a person despair of keeping his justified state for any one day, one hour, one minute of his life? In short, it amounts to this, that we are no longer in a justified state than we are in a state of sinless perfection. Let the reader judge whether such a notion does not lead rather to gloomy scepticism, than to filial and cheerful piety.

§ 19. But I would observe, in the *third* place, that his Lordship seems to have overlooked the great difference there is between the requirements of the moral law under the notion of a *covenant*, and those of the same law under the notion of a *rule*. In the former capacity it can admit of nothing less than perfection of character. This Adam had before the fall, and this he lost by the very first deviation from rectitude. This also the second Adam preserved entire as a substitute; otherwise He would not have been a Saviour. A failure of obedience would have been a failure of a federal righteousness. If any of the posterity of Adam be justified before God, it must be by a gracious imputation of what Jesus Christ has done and suffered in our stead. Hence, "He who knew no sin, was made a sin-offering for us, that we might be constituted righteous in Him," according to a plan of mercy. This was the very design of His incarnation and humiliation unto death; by becoming perfect through suffering, or obtaining a perfection of righteousness in this way, He is become the author of eternal redemption and salvation. But how are we to be made partakers of this federal righteousness? It is, as the Scripture testifies, by our being in Christ. "There is no condemnation [*i. e.*, there is justification] to them who are in Christ Jesus," and the evidence of this privilege is, that we "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." This union is the basis both of justification before God, and of life, or a spiritual principle from Christ. "For the law of the Spirit of life [the quickening power] in Christ Jesus, makes them free from the law of sin and death."

§ 20. Now the inquiry returns, what constitutes that *oneness* on account of which the imputation is made? To imagine that no special oneness at all is necessary is extremely unreasonable; for then it would follow that every man, in whose nature Christ appeared as a perfect character, had an equal claim to His federal righteousness, and justification by it. The Scripture expressly

says, "that the righteousness," thus prepared, "is upon all them that *believe;*" and that to us also "it shall be imputed, if we *believe* on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."* From these passages, in their connexion, among many others, it is plain that *faith* (a living, not a dead and unproductive faith) constitutes a justifying union. A dead faith forms no union in the sight of God, though it may in the charitable view of the Church, whose province it is to judge from explicit profession, while this is not belied by overt acts incompatible with sincerity. But "God looketh not as man looketh; man looketh at the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh at the heart." This faith by which we are justified, though *our own*, is not *of ourselves;* it is "the gift of God," from whom every good gift and every perfect gift proceedeth. While the act and deed is our own, being the exercise of our own mind, will, and heart, we are constrained by every consideration of the case, from Scripture testimony, from pious gratitude, and from rational analogy, to ascribe our possession of the living principle of faith, as of every other internal grace, to the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, as the gift of the Mediator to the members of His mystical body. It is, therefore, of the Spirit of Christ that we are primarily united to Him, and from this union the principle of faith is derived. The obligation to believe is one thing; the ability to believe, is another. The obligation arises from our possessing natural powers and a plain Divine testimony; but the spiritual disposition and actual willingness from the Holy Spirit. A cordial reception of Christ as our righteousness answers the requirements of the law under the notion of a *covenant.*

§ 21. But God's holy law has other requirements under the notion of a *rule.* To have obtained that righteousness which meets the charge of a breach of original perfection, does not excuse the possessor of it from future obedience; otherwise the Divine law would be nothing more than a covenant, and Adam could have been guilty of only one sin: for how could he, or any of his posterity, be a subsequent transgressor, if the law did not continue a rule to man after his breach of covenant? A deviation from the rectitude required by the law, which requirement of rectitude the very notion of a law implies, is sinful in every con-

* Rom. iii. 22. iv. 24. 25.

dition of man, whether at the fall, under the fall, or after a restoration from a condemned and depraved state. With respect to the first transgression, compared with all subsequent ones, there is necessarily this difference, that he could not transgress the law as a rule without at the same time transgressing it as a covenant; but all his subsequent transgressions were a deviation only from the rectitude of a rule. If he was to enjoy a favour only on condition of remaining a perfect character, it is evident that the favour was completely forfeited by the first deviation from that perfection. He failed in performing that very condition on which a continuance of the favour was suspended. To insist, therefore, that any such condition now exists respecting any of the fallen race, is chargeable with as much absurdity as to require personal perfection on a condition which is already forfeited, and which, without a plan of mercy in the substitution of a perfect character, is as impossible as to recall the perfection of Adam. As Adam, consequently, could not transgress the law as a covenant of life without at the same time transgressing it as a rule of right; so neither could he, after the first transgression, violate it as a covenant: which, for the same reason, is the case with his posterity, who can transgress it only as a rule.

§ 22. But now, by a Mediator, there is a *new covenant* of life. What was required of Him, as a substitute, was sinless obedience resembling what was required of the first Adam; and this requirement He fulfilled: for such a Mediator and High Priest became us, "who was holy, harmless, and undefiled, separate from sinners." And the condition of this new covenant proposed to us is, "to believe with the heart unto righteousness," or, in order to obtain His righteousness as our own. Now when this requirement is complied with, "we are not without law to God, but under the law to Christ." The pardoned offender is not rendered lawless. A justified state is not exempt from obligation. We are, as much as Adam was, required to love God with all our heart; and seeing we are bought with a price, from this very consideration there is an additional claim on our grateful obedience, there is the most reasonable demand upon us "to glorify God with our bodies and our spirits." But if the condition of our continuance in a state of justification were the smallest deviation from rectitude, no one in this world, grown up above infancy, could be in a justified state. A failure of conformity to the law as a rule, in any

respect or degree,—such as a defect in loving God "with *all* our heart, with *all* our mind, with *all* our soul, and with *all* our strength, and our neighbour as ourselves,"—is a *sin*. If, therefore, every sin be a breach of covenant, and consequently a forfeiture of justification, we should in vain look for any justified character among men, except peradventure, at the moment of believing; and even then, it may be justly questioned whether any person is entirely free from imperfection.

§ 23. It is now natural to inquire, what then *is* the condition of continuance in justification?—a most important question and to which his Lordship, and every reader, has a right to demand an answer. This I shall endeavour to give "with meekness and fear." It is, in general, the continuance of that, be it what it may, which first put us in a justified state. This cannot be a personal freedom from all sin, else no one would ever be justified; nor can it be freedom from gross offences, since from these many persons who have only a dead faith, or no faith at all, are exempt. It must, therefore, be the possession of that lively faith which is the inseparable effect of possessing the spirit of Christ. "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his;" but "he who is in Christ Jesus has no condemnation." When it can be truly said of any man, that he has no justifying faith, has not the spirit of Christ, or is not united to Him as the living head of His living members, then it may be said that he is not in a justified state; but not otherwise. What persons may fancy their state to be is one thing; what it is in reality, in the sight of God, is a totally different one. Men may deceive themselves, but they cannot deceive the omniscient God. Every man, in the sight of God, is either condemned or justified; but there are different degrees of attainment in holiness; and "whatever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Although Calvinists believe, from the testimony of Scripture, from the wisdom of God, from the offices of Christ, and other considerations, that the living principle of faith, and the union from which it proceeds, never utterly forsakes a person thus favoured, however partially foiled in an hour of temptation, yet none, they contend, degenerated from that state of mind which indicated his justification, has a right to conclude in favour of his acceptance, further than he is conscious of repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ: and he who infers that he was once justified before God, though now he lives in the

indulgence of known sin, has every reason to consider himself a miserable self-deceiver.

§ 24. In short, a deviation from the rule of righteousness is sin, and sin displeases God; the indulgence of it provokes the Holy One of Israel into anger, and such disobedience will bring on either the correction of a Father or the severity of a Judge. If they have a principle of a living faith, but are not so watchful against temptation as they ought to be, "their transgression shall be visited with a rod, and their iniquities with stripes," but the Divine "faithfulness of mercy shall be with them." Sin is not connived at, but corrected; yet, for the sake of his interceding Surety, the offender is not cut down as a cumberer of the ground, nor separated from his covenant-head:—"My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him; my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail." The backslider, if left to himself, or dealt with according to strict demerit, would fall to perdition, (and indeed the smallest sin deserves this exposure, and the cancelling of justification;) but He who quickened him when dead in sin, who gave him the spirit of repentance and faith, and who intercedes for him, in opposition to the claims of unmixed justice, renews him again unto the exercise of repentance and faith. "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." The gracious interceding Surety looks upon him with an eye of reproof and compassion; and he "goes out and weeps bitterly;" the Divine Head of spiritual influence to His mystical Church and members, pours upon him a fresh supply of the Spirit of grace and supplications, and this makes the penitent look unto Him whom he has pierced, and to mourn with bitterness of spirit: and now he cries, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. . . . . Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. . . . . Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit."

§ 25. The reader is requested to judge without prejudice, whether the statement now given be not more consonant to Scripture, more worthy of the Divine perfections, the character of the Saviour, and the interests of practical religion, than the notion contended for by his Lordship—viz., that a *dead* faith and

baptism will introduce a man into a justified state, but only a *lively* faith will insure its continuance, or recover it when lost; that the neglect of *any* practicable duty forfeits a state of justification, which may be always recovered by repentance and faith, &c. It seems, from his account, that the first justification, which is obtained by a *dead* faith, is expected to produce *sinless perfection*, under pain of forfeiture; and that the *same faith* and promise of obedience will not obtain a restoration into the *same state* of acceptance. Have we not a right to demand, why conditions so extremely different should be required for an interest in the same benefit? If a dead faith will justify at one time, why not at another; or, if a lively faith be required for continuance, why not the same required for commencement? If a man with only a dead stock be declared in a good condition, why should not the possession of the same stock be pronounced sufficient a second, a twentieth, or a thousandth time, or why should "the neglect of *any* practicable duty" immediately declare him a bankrupt? If, on the contrary, however, we are placed in a good and acceptable condition by partaking of the spirit of Christ, the continuance of this participation secures the continuance of that acceptable condition. Supposing the condition of continuance to be the *exercise* of faith, that exercise must be incessant and never-failing, and to fall asleep would be to lose our acceptance with God! Whereas, if the condition be a living union to Christ, who is ever present and ever active, then "whether we wake or sleep, live or die, we are accepted of Him." To Him who judgeth infallibly, this is an adequate ground and evidence of the justification of our persons, though to ourselves the *evidence* must be a conscious sincerity of repenting and believing.

§ 26. There is one thing more to be observed, before we close this discussion—viz., that there is an important difference between the justification of our persons, and the justification of our actions. Every sinful act, and every neglect of duty, is condemnable; but it does not follow that every *person* on account of the failure is struck off the list of acceptance, without involving endless absurdities: such as confounding a federal and personal righteousness, —destroying the fundamental difference between a covenant and a rule of action,—placing a fallen sinner in the same predicament of continuance in favour with sinless Adam,—making the Divine Head of influence, as such, a mere cipher in the recovery of our

justification, supposed to be lost,—and imagining justification and condemnation to proceed alternately in rapid succession; a succession as rapid and frequent, for ought we know, as those of individual human volitions—now justified by a dead faith, next condemned for neglect of "*any* practicable duty," then restored by sincere faith, anon condemned for another failure, and so on, it may be, ten thousand times over, till the moment of death; and finally, if "*any*" neglect attach to us at that moment, we lie under condemnation for ever! And these, I apprehend, are the genuine consequences of his Lordship's theory of justification. It must be owned, however, that many of the Christian fathers have been too favourable in their mode of expression to that sentiment; expressions which the corrupt hierarchy of Rome eagerly caught up for advancing its own importance, and which an ignorant multitude as eagerly adopted, as the easiest way to justification and heaven.

SECTION III.

The Bishop's avowed Sentiments concerning FAITH *examined.*

§ 1. His Lordship's peculiar notions concerning faith stated. § 2, 3. His notion concerning the faith of heathens, examined. § 4-6. That a dead faith may rise to a lively faith, examined. § 7. That faith only will not preserve justification, examined. § 8. By his Lordship's own statements; and, § 9, 10. By scriptural illustrations. § 11. The importance of faith and practice deduced from their *ends* respectively. § 12. That faith is not bestowed arbitrarily, examined. § 13. That faith is the result of candour and diligence, examined. § 14. The Calvinistic view of faith summarily explained.

§ 1. WHEN treating on this important article of the Christian doctrine, with a view to refute Calvinism, his Lordship advances some very remarkable sentiments that require examination. Among other things, he supposes that the faith of heathens was believing that compliance with their law was acceptable to God,—that a dead faith may rise to a lively faith,—that faith *only* will not preserve justification,—that faith is the gift of God, but is not bestowed arbitrarily,—and that faith is the result of candour and diligence.

§ 2. "The Gentiles were a law unto themselves; and their faith," his Lordship observes, "consisted in *believing* that a *compliance* with that law was acceptable to the Deity." * It is natural to ask, what deity? They had Moloch and Dagon, Jupiter and Mars, Apollo and Bacchus, Minerva and Venus, with innumerable others. Faith, in the acceptation of believing, it will be allowed, is giving credit to a testimony, and Divine faith requires a Divine testimony; but had any deity of the Gentiles a testimony to give? If it be said that God bore a testimony to their consciences by the law within them, which they believed, it may be again asked, why should this be called faith, any more than their believing that they had passions, or that they were the subjects of hunger and thirst? Or if their consciences bore witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accused or excused, what propriety is there in calling this *faith?* As well may an Atheist be called a believer, because even he cannot get rid of the suggestions of conscience; and his thoughts accuse him for doing or designing some things, or ex-

* Refutation, p. 102, note.

cuse him when he does or designs the contrary. And, indeed, as the apostle observes, the Gentiles were (ἄθεοι) *atheists*, "without God in the world," though the visible effects of an invisible cause, an eternal power and Godhead, rendered them without excuse for being so.

§ 3. But supposing that some of them admitted the conviction of an eternal and almighty Being, and that He was a righteous avenger of evil deeds, and was an approver of virtue; and supposing, too, that we admit the appellation *faith*, in reference to such conviction, what influence could a belief "that a compliance with a law within them was acceptable to the Deity" have on their salvation from sin and guilt? To *believe* that a compliance is *acceptable*, is one thing; but to *comply* is another. A belief which was not productive of obedience, could be nothing more than a dead faith. Must we recur again to the notion, that their dead faith brought them into a state of acceptance with God without baptism? If it be pleaded, that some of them may possibly have rendered as much obedience, according to the means they had, as many Christians who are possessed of a lively faith, I shall not dispute the possibility of it, but must maintain that, on the supposition, they must have derived it from Him who is the Head of all spiritual influence to fallen man. How far He who has power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as the Father has given Him, actually imparts a spiritual influence, which produces a spirit of faith, to adult heathens, it is not my province to determine. It is sufficient for me to know, that the Judge of the whole earth does all things right, that He "wrongeth no man in his matters," and that the methods of His mercy, as well as of His justice, are adorable. Of this, however, we may be sure—first, that if such favours are conferred, they must be, not only for the sake, or through the mediation, of the blessed Saviour, but also by His direct influence; and, secondly, that wherever a spirit of faith exists, it will shew itself by believing the testimony of God in the gospel, when fairly proposed in a language understood by its possession. As sure as any one has the spirit of Christ, he will receive the testimony concerning Him, and devote himself to be governed by His laws, in proportion as he understands it.

§ 4. It is one of his Lordship's very extraordinary sentiments, that a *dead* faith may rise to a *lively* faith. Witness his words:

—"It is very possible that a sinful or negligent Christian may be awakened to a sense of his duty by some calamitous or extraordinary event, and for a time really feel a true and lively faith; but the impression may be effaced, and by yielding to temptation to sin, or by being again engrossed by worldly cares, he may fall from his justified state, without losing all belief in the truth of the gospel. This man's faith *rises from a dead to a lively faith*, and afterwards *relapses into a dead faith again*." * A part of this statement is not controverted—viz., that it is "very *possible* that a sinful or negligent Christian may be *awakened* to a sense of his duty; for with God all things are possible which do not imply a contradiction. He who quickened the sinner when he was dead in trespasses, no doubt can awaken him when sinful or negligent. And this He *can* do by "some calamitous or extraordinary event," provided grace be conveyed to his heart; otherwise the rod will be lifted up in vain, and the severest discipline will be ineffectual. This also is *possible* by reading, by hearing the word of God, by the admonitions, remonstrances, or the reproofs of a friend, by musing on the goodness of God, or by other means innumerable; but none of these things operate on a free agent *mechanically*. The effect will be as the state of his mind is disposed to improve them; and I am apprehensive that a dead faith is but ill adapted to produce a lively effect. If he has but a spark of spiritual life, though the spirit of a living faith be but as smoking flax, these things may contribute to make the fire kindle, and to raise it into a flame; but if the life be gone, not a spark remaining, a supply of fuel will not restore it, except he be baptized with celestial fire.

§ 5. It is again granted, that many a good "*impression* may be effaced," that the fire of affection may be less warm, and the flame of zeal grow dim; and this by "yielding to temptation," or by being too much "engrossed by worldly cares." But that a person who was once dead to sin and alive to God, "may fall from his justified state," depends upon the good pleasure of Him who is his life, his righteousness and strength, who can maintain or dissolve the union from whence his life and righteousness took their origin. And Calvinists think that such declarations as these have some weight:—"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." † "He

* Refutation, p. 160. † John x. 27, 28.

who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."* Indeed, a total falling from the life of faith would not imply "losing all belief in the truth of the gospel;" since what might be prior to possessing the life of faith might still remain.

§ 6. Now the question is, Whether, in any instance, "this man's faith rises from a *dead* to a *lively* faith?" One might think that the proper answer to this question is about as plain as would be the answer to the following,—Whether water left to itself, according to the constituted laws of nature, will rise above its level? With God, indeed, all things are possible; and He who raised Lazarus from the grave, can raise the spiritually dead to life again. If his Lordship will but allow that the giving or the restoring of the life of faith depends more on the grace of God our Saviour than on the will of a man dead in sin, the Calvinists will not quarrel about the remaining parts of the question.

§ 7. His Lordship contends, that faith only will not *preserve* justification. These are his words:—"Faith only will not preserve a man in a justified state; it must be accompanied by works, for faith without works is dead."† One would think it a very natural inference, that if "faith only" will justify a man once, it will do so a second time, or as often as he needs justification; for how can the circumstance of priority or posteriority of time affect the case? If, for instance, his believing in the Trinity and professing obedience is sufficient at one time, why not sufficient at another? Or, if nothing less than a lively faith will do the second time, why should anything less do at the first? If it be said, that at first baptism was added to his dead faith to make it effectual, Calvinists will reply, that they cannot admit the argument to be decided by the force of a Popish conceit: they look (but look in vain) for Scripture and sound reason to confirm it. When, however, it is said "faith *only* will not preserve," the terms may be taken two ways: first, a faith without life will not preserve; and, secondly, a lively faith without works will not preserve. We allow the first, for good reason, because what in its nature cannot introduce us into a justified state, as before proved, cannot preserve that state. But we have some further observations to make upon the second acceptation of the phrase—viz., that a *lively* faith without *works* will not preserve justification. Candour requires us to understand

* Phil. i. 6 † Refutation, p. 119

his Lordship in this way; for he never would impute to us the absurdity of holding the notion of a dead faith having the efficacy of preserving us in a state into which it never introduced us. He must have known our sentiments better; nor would he have given himself so useless a trouble.

§ 8. "Faith *only* will not preserve us." Here several difficulties arise. First, from his Lordship's own declarations, "*Faith* then stands in the place of righteousness, or uniform obedience." * Again, "Repentance and faith, if sincere, will *in all cases* procure justification." It is indeed subjoined, "but obedience must be added, to *preserve* the state of justification when obtained."† This, however, increases the difficulty; for we are told that, "in reality, true Christian faith, and good works pleasant and acceptable to God, are in their own nature *inseparable*. True faith produces good works as naturally as a tree produces its fruit." ‡ If sincere faith "in all cases" will procure justification, why not procure its continuance? And if such faith "naturally" produces good works, and both are "inseparable," of what use is it to warn us against the inefficacy of "faith *only?*" We acknowledge that good works are the proper evidence to ourselves and other men of a true Christian faith; but the appearance of these works does not alter the nature of faith, any more than fruit alters the nature of the tree that bears it.

§ 9. But, secondly, what can be the *preservation* of a justified state, but the continuance of the same cause producing the same effect? His Lordship allows that "faith *only* procures" the favour. How is it, then, that the continuance of the same cause does not preserve the same effect? A good tree is not equally fruitful in all seasons, and a season may occur when the wonted fruit does not appear. Shall we therefore pass the sentence of condemnation upon the tree, and pronounce it to be bad in the root, as well as accidentally bare in the branches? Or shall we not rather continue to justify it as a good tree, and as such preserve it, notwithstanding its accidental failure, and employ suitable means to assist its fructification? But if a tree be planted in a favourable situation, under whatever promise or persuasion of its producing sweet apples, and it uniformly bears only sour crabs, we condemn it, as being different from the promise and persuasion.

§ 10. It will be said, perhaps, that the contrast to good works

* Refutation, p. 112. † Ibid., p. 142. ‡ Ibid., p. 160.

are bad works, rather than no fruit. We will, then, change the illustration. Christian faith in the human mind may be compared to a scion of an excellent quality, that in due time bears corresponding fruit; but if any of the other branches remain of the crab stock, these also may bear fruit of a very different quality. Then the same observations will apply as in the former case. Blessed are those trees of righteousness whose good fruits abound to the suppression of the bad. In another view of the same subject, "our life is hid with Christ in God." From Him we derive a quickening influence and fruitfulness. And those who are in Him only by profession, without a living union, He taketh away, and casteth into the fire; but the branch that beareth fruit, He pruneth it, that it may bring forth more fruit; and then is our heavenly Father most glorified when we bring forth most good fruit. In short, we may safely conclude, that whatever *procures* justification *preserves* it; and that good works, or active holy devotedness to the will of God, are the legitimate evidence in both cases. A vital union to Christ is, in the sight of God, the only thing that *can* render us acceptable. This union is formed, on Christ's part, by His Holy Spirit, and on our part by the spirit of faith aspiring to its Divine object. But the nature of our works shews the nature of our faith, and their degree, the degree of its prevalence.

§ 11. We do not magnify the importance of faith at the expense of practice. Everything should be regarded with reference to its appropriate end. The end of a testimony given is believing it; the end of a command is obeying it; the end of obedience, virtue, and piety, is the chief good, which is objectively the infinite, eternal, and blessed God, and subjectively our enjoyment of Him as our endless portion. The whole of Divine revelation is of the nature of a testimony from God to mankind; hence the importance of believing it without wavering: and much of this testimony is in the form of authoritative command; whence arises the importance of implicit and unreserved obedience. The end of sanctions is an unhesitating compliance; the end of benefits proposed is a grateful reception, and of those actually conferred a profitable improvement; the end of threatenings is abstinence from evil, and, if slighted, condign sufferings. Hence Calvinistic teachers inculcate the importance both of faith and of practice,—the former as the foundation, the latter as the superstructure. Not only the unbeliever, but the offender, of whatever class, is admon-

ished, warned, and threatened in the name of God and our Saviour, "who will come with flaming fire to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." They are in the habit of proclaiming to their hearers that "with God there is no respect of persons," and "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap;" that "to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." I believe they are not behind any other denomination of Christians in reproving sinners of every class, and inculcating personal and relative duties. Look at their societies, their families, their tempers, their conversations, their loyalty, their charitable contributions, their exertions to spread the Scriptures, and to instruct the ignorant, to promote the peace of society, and the happiness of mankind,—view them through an unprejudiced medium, and "by their *fruits* ye shall *know* them."

§ 12. His Lordship avows that faith is the *gift* of God, but that He does not bestow it arbitrarily. While commenting on the Church Article on Free-will, which states that man "cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to *faith* and calling upon God," he observes, respecting true faith, as contradistinguished from "a bare belief in the Divine mission of Christ," that "it is indeed the gift of God, for without God's assistance no man can possess it; but it is a gift not bestowed arbitrarily, capriciously, or irrespectively."* That the infinitely wise God should bestow a favour, or do anything else, capriciously, without reason, or irrespectively, without a wise reference to a worthy end, is out of the question; for his Lordship must be too equitable to impute to Calvinists a sentiment which they utterly abhor. But they do avow the sentiment that His gifts, as distinguished from rewards, are bestowed *arbitrarily*, or according to His sovereign pleasure; and faith among other gifts. "He has mercy on whom He will have mercy." And has He not a right "to do what He will with His own?" Should our eye be evil because He bestows gifts upon others where there is no ground of claim? Has He not a right to impart "gifts unto men, yea, to the rebellious also, that the Lord God may dwell among them?" Is there no ground of reason and wisdom in conferring them beside the worthiness of the receiver? Distributive justice, indeed, in rewards and punishments, is exercised "respectively." Its measure

* Refutation, p. 54.

of operation is founded on the worthiness or demerit of its object. But it is the prerogative of benevolence, grace, and mercy to overlook worthiness in their objects; and the measure of their exercise is adequately found in supreme wisdom. If man, since the fall, "cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to *faith*," and if God *give* him a supernatural principle from whence "faith and calling upon God" arises, though before "dead in trespasses and sins," where is the ground of equitable remonstrance? The receiver, it is self-evident, can have none, nor can the unworthy have any; and as to the Giver, His own good pleasure, directed by a depth of wisdom to us unfathomable, ought to exclude all cavil from His creatures. In short, though He rewards according to the measure of obedience, He gives in a manner, in a degree, and in a season worthy of Himself, and far beyond our deservings.

§ 13. Once more, it is asserted, that "faith is the result of candour and diligence." Thus his Lordship reasons:—"The Bereans were commended, 'in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so;' and it is immediately added, 'therefore many of them believed:' hence it appears, that the faith of the Bereans was the result of the candour with which they listened to the preaching of the apostle, and of the diligence with which they inquired into the evidences of the gospel."* The question is not, whether the Bereans manifested candour and diligence, nor yet whether this was commendable; for upon this there can be but one sentiment. It is likewise agreed, that their candour and diligence preceded their explicit avowal of the gospel. Nay, we may go a step further, and admit that their faith in part resulted from these estimable particulars. But were the Bereans less commendable on supposition that they were inspired with candour, and divinely excited to diligence? "They received the word with all readiness of mind;" but this is no evidence that they were not graciously influenced to do so. The question is, whether their faith was the result exclusively of their candour and diligence; or, whether *these* were not the fruit of an influence from above?

§ 14. Faith, in the sense of *believing*, implies several things. First, a testimony; and a Divine faith must have a Divine testimony, in order to deserve that appellation: secondly, a knowledge

* Refutation, p. 24.

of the thing declared, or a sufficient acquaintance with the language in which the message is delivered: thirdly, a freedom of will; so that there is no compulsion, constraint, or influence whatever from God to believe a false testimony; though He may in equity and judgment *leave* the wicked to their own delusions "to believe a lie;" and a freedom also from restraint in the exercise of will, when truth is to be credited, is implied: fourthly, a *disposition*, or principle; and the nature of faith, as either dead or living, will be according to the defective or efficient principle. If the disposition be not spiritually alive, the most awful or exhilarating testimony will beget but a dead faith; but where the disposition is alive to God, or divinely spiritual, the testimony will beget a lively belief. Such a disposition will shew itself in various ways besides believing; and among others by "candour and diligence," readiness of mind to receive truth, and an impartial search into its evidences. Admitting, then, that faith is the "result of candour and diligence," these also are themselves the result of gracious influence. Calvinists are far from supposing that candour in listening, and diligence of inquiry into the evidences of the gospel, are of no use; on the contrary, they consider them of great use. But they cannot consistently draw the conclusion, that the disposition itself from whence they spring needs no previous Divine influence to produce that result;—any more than they can infer that there may be an effect without any adequate cause.

Section IV.

The Bishop's avowed Sentiments concerning Good Works *examined.*

§ 1. The Bishop's contradictory statements. § 2. His comment on St Paul's faith without charity or good works, examined. § 3 5. His opinion that we may recommend ourselves to the favour and mercy of God, and render ourselves worthy the mediation of Christ, examined. § 6, 7. The imprudence of using such language. § 8–11. Ministerial addresses employed by Calvinists described and vindicated. § 12. His Lordship's view of the importance of recommending good works considered, with an appeal to the actual *effects* of different modes.

§ 1. On the subject of good works we have several statements made in his Lordship's "Refutation," which require no small degree of ingenuity even plainly to reconcile them. In one place we read thus:—"Indeed that there is *no necessary connexion* between faith or belief and good works, even according to St Paul, who is the great advocate for the doctrine of justification by faith, is evident from a passage in his First Epistle to the Corinthians—'Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.' Could St Paul have described faith in stronger terms, or could he have inculcated the necessity of *good works* in stronger language?" * In another place we read:—"In reality, true Christian faith, and good works pleasant and acceptable to God, are in their own nature *inseparable*. True faith produces good works as naturally as a tree produces its fruit." † In a *note* we have this explanation:—"Faith, or the general belief of the truth of Christianity, is not necessarily connected with good works. True Christian faith and good works are inseparable." Again:—"The ministers of our Church are unquestionably authorised by our Articles to speak of faith as signifying a firm reliance upon the merits of Christ for salvation, necessarily productive of good works." ‡

§ 2. Now, if St Paul, in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, intended "a true Christian faith," how can his Lordship's remarks upon it be reconciled with his other declarations, that faith and

* Refutation, p. 130. † Ibid., p. 160. ‡ Ibid., p. 163.

good works are inseparable? and if St Paul did not intend such faith, but some other,—as a general belief of the "truth of Christianity," or the faith by which miracles were performed, which appears from the connexion to be the case, — of what use are the observations upon it? Need any one be assured by proof—a professed appeal to Scripture evidence—that a faith which no one expects to produce good works, has no "necessary connexion" with them? At least, did any Calvinist suppose any such connexion? His Lordship asks, "Could St Paul have described *faith* in stronger terms?" What faith? The terms, indeed, are strong to describe the faith of miracles; but the following are stronger to indicate justifying or saving faith:—"Faith *unfeigned;*" "the faith of God's elect;" faith which is "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen;" "*precious* faith;" faith which "overcometh the world;" "most *holy* faith." That by which a man is justified, by which his heart is purified, and his person sanctified; by which he has access to God, by which he has power, or privilege, to become a son of the Most High; that by which Christ dwells in his heart, by which he offers a sacrifice acceptable to God, and walks with Him;—these are superior qualities, and more excellent effects than those of which St Paul speaks in the passage above referred to.

§ 3. We are again told, that we may *recommend* ourselves to God by good works:—"Men, as they now are, are not capable of perfect obedience, but they are capable of endeavouring to attain it. Such an endeavour is their indispensable duty; and although it may not in all instances, and on every occasion be effectual, it is humbly hoped that it may be *sufficient to recommend them to the favour of God;* forasmuch as what their infirmity lacketh, Christ's justice hath supplied." His Lordship avows, that a minister of the Established Church ought not to be blamed for "hoping that his congregation will *recommend themselves to the favour of God* by a regular attendance upon Divine ordinances, and a uniform practice of religious duties;" and for "urging the necessity of *recommending ourselves to the mercy of God,* and *rendering ourselves worthy the mediation of Jesus Christ* by a holiness of living and by an abhorrence of vice."

§ 4. That good works are pleasant and acceptable to God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, is language that any Christian may approve, but the phrases above printed in italics appear inconsistent with

the economy of grace, and not a little offensive to Christian humility, especially in the connexion in which they are introduced. How much more suitable and pious the language and sentiment of the patriarch Jacob, "*I am not worthy* of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth which Thou hast shewed unto Thy servant;" or of the centurion, "*I am not worthy* that Thou shouldest come under my roof."

§ 5. As words acquire different acceptations, according to their connexion, so we find the term "worthy" denoting different things. Christians are exhorted to "walk worthy of their vocation," "worthy of the Lord," "worthy of God." In such phrases, the obvious meaning is, that they conduct themselves in a manner suitable to their privileges and relations. In this sense we may say, that a man conducts himself *worthily* in certain circumstances; as Solomon said of Adonijah, "If he will shew himself a *worthy* man, there shall not a hair of him fall to the earth." Sometimes the term "worthy" denotes deserving; as when a man is said to be "worthy of death," or "worthy of punishment," or when it is said of God that He is "worthy to be praised," and of the Divine Saviour, that He is "worthy to receive glory, and power," &c. Again, when it is said that "the labourer is *worthy* of his reward," that the saints "shall walk in white, for they are *worthy*," it implies not only suitableness, but also a kind of desert. Where there is a stipulation, either tacit or expressed, on performance of the condition, the notion of desert is attached to the reward stipulated, however unmeritorious might be the performance independent of promise.

§ 6. But in which of these acceptations, or in what other, are we to understand the phrase which his Lordship has undertaken to vindicate? Is there *any* sense in which it can be vindicated, when addressed to a *mixed* audience, in which it is more than probable there are many unconverted persons, or in a publication addressed to professing Christians promiscuously, the far greater part of whom have little more of Christianity than the name? To urge on the *unconverted* the necessity of "rendering themselves worthy of the mediation of Jesus Christ by holiness of living and an abhorrence of vice," has a direct tendency to delude them. It tends to foster pride and presumption. Pride, because it leads them to self-sufficiency, rather than to "repentance towards God," and self-abhorrence before Him, on account of their multiplied

offences. This was not the method our Saviour took in dealing with the unconverted and self-righteous. I said also that such language tends to foster presumption in the unconverted; because it leads them to conclude that they are in a justified state, or converted already. Instead of this, they should be alarmed of their danger, until signs of contrition and some unequivocal fruits of repentance are supposed to shew themselves. To urge a profane swearer, a drunkard, a gambler, a fornicator, and the like, many of whom attend public worship, and some of them read a book of fashionable divinity, to "render themselves worthy the mediation of Jesus Christ by holiness of living," &c., is an exhortation egregiously misplaced, and calculated to subvert the gospel order. The address would not probably be disliked by the ignorant, the proud, and the presumptuous; but for that very reason it is the more likely to delude them, as exciting hopes of success in a way which will never be realised, and which, in the common order of the Divine procedure, never can be. Even the truly pious, knowing the address to be promiscuous, so as to include the impenitent and pharisaic, would be rather grieved than edified; and the more they knew of themselves, and of the spiritual design of the Scriptures, to humble the sinner, to stain the glory of all flesh, to exalt the Saviour "as all in all" in the work of a sinner's acceptance before God, the less could they approve of it in such connexion.

§ 7. The phrase "to *recommend* themselves to the *favour*," or, "to the *mercy* of God," in the same promiscuous manner, is equally objectionable, and for the same reasons. They have enough of native pride and of habitual presumption to fancy that, by a few pharisaic endeavours, which to them, indeed, is a mighty effort, they are sure to obtain the favour of God: whereas the axe should be laid to the root of their sin; the aim should be to humble them, to make them feel their unworthiness, their guilt, their exposure to the holy vengeance of God as transgressors; to excite them to pray for mercy, "to seek the Lord while He may be found, and to call upon Him while He is near." That "endeavouring to attain perfect obedience" is every man's indispensable duty, is freely admitted; but to urge this promiscuously on men, because they bear the name of Christians, though full of sinful lusts and passions, is "zeal without knowledge," because, as proposed to them, it is duty misplaced,—as much out of place as would be the duty of an adult to be baptized, and to partake of the Lord's supper,

previous to repentance and faith: for though it is the "indispensable duty" of every man in a Christian country, who has not been baptized, to submit to that ordinance, yet to urge this directly and promiscuously, without insisting on the previous requisites, would be the ready way to profane a Divine institution, to multiply hypocrites and Pharisees, and to ruin the honour and purity of the Christian Church.

§ 8. Habitual transgressors, then, should be alarmed of their danger, by shewing them the error of their ways; reproved, and convinced of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; informed of the odious nature and ruinous consequences of sin, and of their own sins particularly; and assured from the highest authority, that if they repent not, they shall perish, and if they believe not the gospel-record from the heart, they shall be condemned. While so employed, the preacher, or the practical writer, may hope that the Holy Spirit by His gracious influence will succeed his humble and faithful efforts. If not, he has delivered his own soul; but if his message have the desired effect, or if he have room to suppose it, he describes the state of such persons, and sets before them the gospel remedy. Like a skilful physician, he adapts his prescription to the nature of the complaint, and the circumstances of the patient. The other method, which prescribes remedies and regimens to all alike, without a proper discrimination of diseases and circumstances, and without observing symptoms, is *empiricism* of the most dangerous kind.

§ 9. When there is good reason to conclude that persons are the subjects of "godly sorrow that worketh repentance not to be repented of," let them be instructed in the exercise of *faith in Christ*, as "the end of the law and the prophets," as the great ordinance of God for righteousness to every one that believeth with the heart, as "the *way*" to the Father, "the *truth*" of the promises and types, and "the *life*" everlasting. "He that hath the Son hath life"—the life of righteousness, the life of holiness, and the promise of the life of glory. Let him be clearly instructed, that true faith receives the Divine testimony on the authority of God, and the Lord Jesus Christ as the only and all-sufficient Saviour from sin, as well as from future misery; that it implies a firm trust and confidence in Him as the Divine Prophet, Priest, and King, and an unreserved surrender of the soul and body, in life and death, to His disposal. Let him now be directed to "live by the faith of the

Son of God," who loved him, and gave Himself for him; to walk worthy of so exalted a relation and privilege; to abstain from fleshly lusts, that war against the soul's welfare and comfort, yea, from all appearance of evil; to run the race that is set before him, looking unto Jesus, and for that purpose to lay aside every weight, and every besetting sin. Let him now be exhorted not to be weary in well-doing, but to maintain the profession of his faith without wavering, holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience; to be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, being assured that his labour, his work of faith and labour of love, shall not be in vain in the Lord. Let him now be reminded of the greatness of gospel privileges, in order to awaken his gratitude.

§ 10. Grace, however, in its highest attainment, does not, cannot alter the nature of sin. It is still the abominable thing which the Lord hateth. Hence, thanksgiving for past deliverance from the guilt and dominion of sin should be accompanied with watching unto prayer for assisting grace, with all perseverance, and that a belief of the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints will save no one without *actually persevering* in the Christian course of obedience. He should recollect that he is in an enemy's country, that if left to himself he is unstable as water, that he is every moment in danger of backsliding, of grieving the Spirit of God, and wounding his own soul. He may profitably call to mind, that many high-sounding professors have apostatised to their eternal ruin, and that he has no certainty of being chosen to eternal life, or of enjoying future happiness, but by persevering in the way of holy obedience; for Christ is become the author of eternal salvation to them who obey Him, and to them only: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." While he is often reminded of his own weakness, he is as often directed to the strong for strength, to be obtained in the way of duty. This is the true Christian: he has been convinced of sin by the law of God, which is holy, just, and good; he has confided in the merits and righteousness of Christ; old sinful courses and habits are passed away, and the whole soul, in its views, its judgment, conclusions, and the direction of its passions, is become new; he trusts in Christ Jesus, having no confidence in the flesh, and loves Him in sincerity; he casts off the works of darkness, and puts on the armour of light, walking honestly and decently as in the day; for-

getting past attainments, so as not to trust in them, he presses forward to the prize of his high calling; he sincerely endeavours to do all things whatsoever Christ has commanded, and by gracious encouragements, has an eye to the recompence of reward. But after all, he reckons himself an unprofitable servant. He renounces all merit and worthiness of his own, rejoicing only in Christ Jesus, the Mediator and Surety of the new covenant; that covenant which is ordered in all things and sure. Standing by faith on the Rock of ages, he rejoices in hope of the glory of God, but with holy fear and trembling, while contemplating his own weakness and insufficiency, or if dealt with in strict justice, according to his hourly failures. "Shouldst thou, Lord, mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand? But with thee there is forgiveness, that thou mayest be feared." "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe."

§ 11. I make no apology to the reader for dwelling so much upon this point; especially as his Lordship gives a very different account of Calvinism. And as he is pleased to say that those who are called Evangelical ministers "not only delude their unlearned congregations, and encourage vice and immorality among their followers, but they really delude themselves, and fall into opinions and assertions totally inconsistent with the spirit of our holy religion," —that "the manner in which they perform the duties of their ministry, both public and private, is injudicious and mischievous in the extreme," and that "the dangerous tendency of their tenets and practice cannot be exposed too frequently, or with too much earnestness,"—it seemed requisite to give the reader an opportunity to form his own judgment which of the two methods is most conformable to the sacred oracles, and most conducive to the interests of real Christianity.

§ 12. His Lordship dwells much on the importance of "good works," and of the clergy insisting upon them as the condition of our salvation. Certainly good works are very good things; but among what congregations are they actually found to the greatest extent, and in the greatest variety? If those of the Evangelical clergy be candidly compared with those of the gentlemen whom his Lordship defends in opposition to them, they need not shrink at the comparison. Where shall we find most devotion, punctuality in attending Divine ordinances, family worship, catechising the young and ignorant, visiting the poor, the widow, and the fatherless, abstinence from the schools of levity and vice, charitable

contributions, reformation of manners, order in society, and an awakening concern to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling? If their hearers be more inclined to frequent circles of dissipation and folly, the card-table, the ball, the assembly, the play, the opera, or the horse-race; if they are more addicted to the jovial board or the deceitful glass, to delight in theatrical exhibitions, novels, and romances, to frequent political clubs and spouting societies, to utter profane oaths, and on trivial occasions to take the most holy Name in vain; if they are more given to pursue their diversions on the Lord's-day, or less conscientious in keeping it holy in religious exercises; if they are more lax in observing the relative duties of parents and children, masters and servants; if they are more cruel to men or brutes, or less chaste and temperate, honest and industrious—let them by all means be condemned in the comparison. If otherwise, the following admonition may be seasonably remembered: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."

CHAPTER III.

AVOWED SENTIMENTS OF THE BISHOP ON REDEMPTION AND PREDESTINATION EXAMINED.

SECTION I.

The Bishop's avowed Sentiments on REDEMPTION *examined.*

§ 1, 2. The subject stated. § 3. The revealed character of God. § 4, 5. The actual state of mankind. § 6. A revelation of the Divine character to sinners. § 7. Though under no obligation in justice, it became His mercy to do this. § 8. The foundation of the gospel call. § 9. What is required of the sinner. § 10. God's right to influence the heart. § 11. The exercise of this right no hardship upon any. § 12, 13. The grounds of obligation to obey the gospel. § 14–16. This point further discussed. § 17. The *price* of redemption. § 18. Redemption itself. § 19. The *design* of God in the sacrifice of Christ. § 20. As a Governor; and, § 21. As a Sovereign. § 22. Though this price is an adequate basis of reconciliation, yet, § 23. None will be reconciled to God until they are divinely influenced. § 24. Calvin's view of redemption. § 25. That the *benefits* of Christ's passion extend to the whole human race; and, § 26. That every man is *enabled* to attain salvation, examined. § 27, 28. That the remedy is of equal extent with the evil, examined.

§ 1. UNDER this head, we are taught by his Lordship, that the benefits of Christ's passion extend to the *whole human race,* and that *universal righteousness and pardon* are the effects of Christ's obedience. As most terms are capable of different acceptations, as already shewn under the foregoing discussion, according to the connexion in which they stand, it is not my present design so much to controvert the use of the general expressions, "the whole human race," and "universal righteousness and pardon," as to examine the sentiment intended to be conveyed by them in their present situation. For this purpose, it will be proper to produce the passages themselves :—"The doctrine of universal redemption —namely, that the benefits of Christ's passion extend to the *whole*

human race, or that every man is *enabled* to attain salvation through the merits of Christ—was *directly* opposed by Calvin, who maintained that God from all eternity decreed that certain individuals of the human race should be saved, and that the rest of mankind should perish everlastingly, without the *possibility* of attaining salvation."* Again:—"It is natural to conclude that the *remedy, proposed* by a Being of infinite power and mercy, would be commensurate to the evil; and, therefore, as the evil operated instantly in producing the corruption of Adam's nature, which was soon transmitted to his offspring, we may infer that all who were to partake of that corrupt nature were to partake also of the appointed remedy. All nations of the earth, past, present, and to come, without any exception or limitation, shall be blessed in the promised Messiah—that is, for His sake, and through His mediation."† "Universal sin and condemnation were the consequence of Adam's disobedience, and universal *righteousness* and *pardon* the effect of Christ's obedience."‡

§ 2. A great number of passages are also introduced to prove, that "in the New Testament every expression which can denote *universality* is applied to the merits and sacrifice of Christ."§ This is readily admitted; but the interpretation of them must be such as not to contradict, but to harmonise with other passages equally plain, and with the general tenor of Scripture: for as we believe that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God," we must admit that there *is* a perfect agreement between the parts, without any real discrepancy of meaning, while it is equally certain, that there is in reality a harmonising principle. I shall, therefore, in the first place, produce what appears to me to possess that character; and, in the next place, examine his Lordship's declarations on the subject.

§ 3. In my apprehension, the harmonising principle is found in the *revealed character of God*, in connexion with the *actual state of mankind*. Without just views of these two points properly compared, we are always in danger of verging to opposite extremes, and of losing sight of the "golden mean." Now the revealed character of God, in reference to mankind, is that of a gracious Sovereign, on the one hand; and that of an equitable Governor, on the other. Both these are alike essential. According to the former, "He

* Refutation, p. 184.
† Ibid., pp. 185, 186.
‡ Ibid., p. 189.
§ Ibid., p. 187.

worketh all things," worthy of Him, "according to the counsel of His own will;" He creates, preserves, new-creates, adorns, and glorifies; all which are worthy of His goodness, wisdom, and mercy. According to the latter, He rules in righteousness, and does nothing but what is right: His laws are holy, the obligation of conformity to them is founded in equity and truth. The physical powers of man are adequate to what is required, if properly employed; and when not so employed, the fault is exclusively in himself.

§ 4. The next thing to be considered is, the actual state of mankind. With all Christians, who hold the necessity of redemption by a mediator, it is an acknowledged fact, that mankind are in a state of apostasy, or that "man is very far gone from original righteousness;" and, in consequence of this apostasy, that "man is of his own nature inclined to evil." But no *defection* or *infection* of our nature, deprives man either of his physical powers, or of his uncontrolled freedom to act according to the dictates of his own mind; and the obligation to act aright, therefore, continues unimpaired. Were it possible for apostasy from rectitude to exonerate man from obligation, this most absurd consequence would follow—viz., that a creature could at any time by an act of rebellion render himself lawless, or "without law to God;" and, of course, place himself beyond the bounds of Divine jurisdiction!

§ 5. Notwithstanding the sinfulness of mankind, they have a capability of enjoying the chief good—God all-sufficient; and they continue under obligation to *seek* that good. Possessed of understanding and free-will, they are bound to choose the best object within the circle of their knowledge, adapted to promote their moral improvement and future happiness. But as man could never possibly recover his original righteousness,—any more than he could recall a past transaction,—and the sanction of the law continued in force, hence the necessity of a substitute in a plan of redeeming mercy. As the equitable Governor required His law and government to be respected and honoured, without which they must be regarded as unmeaning ciphers, the gracious Sovereign found a method of effecting this by a wonderful substitution. "What the law could not do, in that it was *weak* through the *flesh*, [*i.e.*, incapable of effecting, on account of our depraved state,] God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, [*i.e.*, such likeness as was needful for a substitute,] and for sin, [*i.e.*, a sin-offering,] condemned sin in the flesh [*i.e.*, made

satisfaction to justice, in our nature:] that the righteousness of the law [*i.e.*, what the law required, whether moral or ceremonial, as the ground of imputation] might be fulfilled in us," by our appropriation of it on the terms proposed for justification. And the proper evidence, the genuine fruit of such privilege, is "walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."*

§ 6. Men, after the fall, became vain in their imaginations, giving themselves up to sinful indulgences and idolatry. Hence, God raised up witnesses to testify His abhorrence of their crimes and their desert of punishment, accompanied with exhibitions of mercy, in virtue of the great atonement, to the penitent and believing. The requisitions of the Supreme Ruler of men were inculcated; the sanctions of His government were adapted to their circumstances; and preachers of righteousness were invested with His authority, and "moved by the Holy Ghost" to proclaim His righteous and gracious will. The settled plan of redemption was gradually revealed, until by the apostles it was set in the light of open day. Now, the whole of that revelation which was intended for the use of future ages, is contained in the canonical books of the Old and the New Testament, which a gracious Providence has wonderfully preserved.

§ 7. Though God was under no antecedent obligation in justice, as the equitable Governor, to give mankind a revelation of His will, or to form a plan of redemption, yet, having formed such plan as a gracious Sovereign, it became His wisdom and mercy to announce it. Therefore "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son."† This great salvation "at the first began to be spoken by the Lord," but afterwards "was confirmed by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will."‡ And now the gospel of salvation, the message of reconciliation from God to man, is commanded to be proclaimed "to all nations" for the obedience of faith.

§ 8. The foundation of the gospel call to evangelical repentance for the remission of sins, and to cordial faith in Christ for justification, is "Jesus Christ, and him crucified," "who was made sin [*i.e.*, a sin-offering] for us, that we might be made the righteous-

* Rom. viii. 3, 4. † Heb. i. 1, 2. ‡ Heb. ii., 3, 4.

ness of God [*i.e.*, constituted righteous by the righteousness which God has provided] in him" who is "the Lord our righteouness." This message of reconciliation—"to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, without imputing their trespasses unto them"—was the great means of conversion in the apostolic days, and has been ever since. By this "God caused them to triumph in every place." It is a message worthy of God, —of sovereign (*i.e.*, arbitrary) grace, in its provision,—and of His equitable government, in the manner of dispensing it.

§ 9. Man, in every stage of his existence, being indispensably obliged to obey the call of God, who is incapable of proposing inequitable terms of compliance, requires of every one to whom the message is addressed, unreserved submission,—"to shake off his sins by repentance," with the promise of pardon, and to "submit to the righteousness of God" by faith for acceptance; and as mankind are already under the sentence of condemnation for the breach of Divine law, both as a covenant and as a rule, by their refusal of the appointed plan of mercy their condemnation is not only confirmed, but also aggravated. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light."

§ 10. Notwithstanding this general provision, God has not relinquished His right of access to the human heart, "to turn it as rivulets of water." He can make it hunger and thirst after righteousness, and direct it to Himself as the source of its happiness, while the will is left perfectly free in its choice. Though man in his sinful depravity has no claim upon God for any supernatural influence, God must relinquish His essential character of a gracious Sovereign before He can give up His right of influencing the hearts of men, under the direction of infinite wisdom. He is gracious and merciful in proposing conditions so advantageous to the fallen creature; and who shall say to Him, "What doest Thou?" if He proceed still further with some, and open their hearts, and shine into their minds, and implant in them the spirit of faith. How can He, in this, be unjust to others, while all are under the same condemnation? Has He not a sovereign (or arbitrary) right to confer His favours on whom He pleases, when all alike are destitute of just claim?

§ 11. If it be urged that this distinction in favour of some bears hard upon others, I ask, how, and why? There would be some

force in the objection if they were willing to comply with the terms proposed, and God unwilling; but if He is infinitely gracious and sincere in the terms proposed, and urges them with promises "exceeding great and precious,"—if He puts no hindrance of any kind in the way, but removes innumerable stumblingblocks and difficulties—"are not His ways equal, and their ways unequal?" May He not say to them, as He said of old to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the men of Judah, "Judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?"* No one can question that it was in the right and power of a gracious Sovereign to take away from that people "the heart of stone, and to give them a heart of flesh"—to "put His fear in their hearts" and "His Holy Spirit within them," that they might "not depart from Him"—without depriving Him of His essential character of Supreme Benefactor. Yet this did not exculpate them, because they had every requisite to constitute their obligation to comply; otherwise, what meaning can there be in those and similar expostulations? To suppose that the restoration of a spiritual principle, once possessed, but since forfeited and lost, is the basis of moral obligation, is a sentiment fraught with endless absurdities, though this, however, is not the place to point them out.

§ 12. Every one to whom the gospel is addressed is under obligation to seek the blessings it proposes, as well as to obey the precepts it contains; such as, remission of sin, by repentance; acceptance into Divine favour, by faith; gracious assistance, by prayer; holy conformity to Jesus Christ, by the use of all appointed means; and everlasting life, by walking in the ways of wisdom and universal obedience. These blessings flow through Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And were there no sense in which Christ "gave Himself a ransom" for all those who are morally obliged to seek these blessings for His sake, I acknowledge that there would not be an adequate basis for their obligation to do so. If Jesus Christ, in no sense, lived and died for their sake, how can they be obliged to seek these blessings for His mediation's sake? Without adequate means, or objective sufficiency of merit, ready to be laid to their account on compliance, how could they be consistently exhorted to seek them, since it is unworthy of God to

* Isa. v. 3, 4.

propose to them, on any terms, what was in no sense intended for them. It is idle to say that they are obliged to obey the command of God, until it can be shewn that He requires men to believe a falsehood. I know it has been observed, that God requires no man to believe that Christ died for him in particular, but for sinners. But if He died for sinners indefinitely, is not each individual included in that indefinite number? And if by "sinners" be meant a definite number, how can *every* sinner to whom the gospel comes be laid under an indefinite obligation to seek these blessings for the sake of what Christ has done and suffered?

§ 13. These considerations, among many others, constrain me to regard the blessed Saviour, in the whole of His mediatorial undertaking, as the great ordinance of God proposed to mankind without limitation, *for the sake of whom* they are encouraged to seek all the blessings they require. If they need an atoning sacrifice, a justifying righteousness, in short, a perfect meritorious character as their substitute, these blessings are proposed to the destitute sinners indefinitely, and consequently to *them*. If it be said, that the proposal is made to those who *feel* their need, and on this condition, IF they experience their case to be miserable, and sincerely desire to obtain the blessing, it is granted that there are special encouragements to such characters,—as in our Lord's sermon on the mount; but how can others be threatened for rejecting what was never, in any sense, intended for them? If it be again urged, that no sinner *knows* but that Christ died for him, or, does not know but he is included in the atonement made, I reply, Does God require the ignorance of His creatures as the basis of His government? or is it worthy of His character to make it the ground of human obligation?

§ 14. The question is not whether special promises are made to persons under certain gracious exercises of mind, but whether any impenitent and unbelieving persons are condemned, finally condemned, for not accepting what God graciously offers, or seeking to obtain gospel blessings, through the mediation and meritorious sufferings of Christ. If none were, in *any sense*, designed for those who eventually perish, how can they be said to reject them? Or, how can they be condemned for not seeking an impossibility; and an impossibility, too, founded in the appointment of God, and not merely in their own impotence?

§ 15. The atoning sacrifice of Christ, His sufferings, blood-

shedding, and death, make a very prominent part of the apostolic writings. These being the substance and reality to which all the typical sacrifices under the Old Testament dispensation referred, nothing could be more proper and important than the stress laid upon them by the apostles. But surely the Redeemer's incarnation and obedience, without which there could have been no atoning sacrifice, must be equally important and necessary in themselves; nor indeed can I perceive any good reason why *every* part of the Saviour's undertaking should not be considered as equally essential to our redemption; and I would humbly propose it to consideration, whether part of His substitution be not of the same character and extent? Why should one part be more limited than another? If His death be limited, why not His obedience and incarnation? If He assumed the nature of mankind indefinitely, why not their sorrows? If He obeyed the law without limitation, why not suffer the penalty threatened by it to an equal extent? And if His mediatorial obedience unto death, being of infinite worth, admitted of no increase or diminution, on what principle can we say that the atoning merits admitted of any? Is it conceivable that, by a supposed increase or diminution of *objects* ultimately saved, His incarnation, conformity to the law, or suffering at the hand of justice, could have been otherwise than they were? Can we, even in thought, add to or diminish from infinite worth?

§ 16. It has been said that the sacrifice of Christ is sufficient for all, had it been the design of God to include them. Is not this, however, a virtual acknowledgment that the limitation is not in the sacrifice itself, but in the objects? If the atoning sacrifice were even *capable* of any diminution or limitation, for that very reason it would not be commensurate to the demands of justice and infinite perfection. What law and justice required was a person of infinite worth in human nature, and that nature to become a sacrifice without spot or blemish; less was not sufficient, and more was not necessary, irrespective entirely of the number of objects. As the sun is neither diminished nor increased on account of the blindness or the sight, the increase or diminution, of terrestrial inhabitants, so the Sun of righteousness, in His incarnation, obedience, sufferings, merits, atonement, righteousness, and federal perfection, knows no diminution and increase, on account of the objects, as either many or few, who are ultimately benefited by Him. To suppose that the design of God respecting

a limited number, who shall be finally happy, can alter the nature of the sacrifice itself, or even the extent of its intrinsic efficacy, seems highly derogatory both to God and the Redeemer.

§ 17. It does not appear to me that we are authorised by Scripture to regard the sacrifice of Christ as our redemption itself, so much as that by which we have redemption, or *with which* we are or may be redeemed. It is the meritorious cause, the grand means, the inestimable price, and the Divine foundation of our redemption. And so are His incarnation, and His perfect obedience, as well as His death. It is that without which there was no remission, no justification, no eternal salvation. It is a foundation of infinite worth and of unbounded extent, both in itself considered, and as the medium of moral government conducted by a merciful Sovereign and an equitable Ruler and Judge.

§ 18. Redemption, properly speaking, and in Scripture usage, is deliverance *from* something which must needs be effected by some *means*. Thus Israel was redeemed *from* Egyptian bondage *by* miraculous power; the captive is released *from* confinement *by* price, exchange, or force; and the Church of Christ is redeemed *from* all evil, guilt, sin, Satan, and hell, *by* the acts of Christ, His federal engagement, incarnation, spotless obedience, His voluntary sufferings, bloodshedding, death, resurrection, ascension, intercession, the power of His Spirit, and His mighty energy at the resurrection. The *price*, or meritorious cause, was His humiliation; by virtue of which, in His exalted state, He actually redeems by His power. And all the members of His mystical body, from the beginning, were redeemed by Divine power on the credit of that humiliation unto death of the promised Messiah. No sinner, therefore, can be properly said to be *redeemed* until he is personally delivered from some enemy or evil, by the interposition of an adequate price, and the exertion of an adequate power. Price without power is but a preparation, provision, or means, without any effect or saving benefit; and power without a price is not worthy of justice or wisdom, the holiness of God's nature, or the honour of His moral government.

§ 19. Here it is proper to notice the *design* of God in the appointment of an atoning sacrifice. And for illustrating this important point, it appears to me of great use to recollect the twofold character of God—that of an equitable Governor, and that of an arbitrary Dispenser of benefits; in other words, a Judge and

a Sovereign. In both characters God is supreme, having none above Him in whatever capacity He acts. The reader, therefore, should be aware, that I do not use the terms *sovereign* and *sovereignty* as synonymous with supreme and supremacy. In all my discussions on these subjects, I consider sovereignty, when applied to the Supreme Being, as expressive of the arbitrary pleasure of a *benefactor*, because in no other capacity can He exercise arbitrary pleasure. He is supreme in the exercise of His justice, in judgments and punishments, but not arbitrary, or without a just cause or demerit in the object. When He acts as Supreme Ruler and Judge, His proceedings are founded in equity; but when He acts as a Sovereign, His proceedings are founded in favour, dispensed with wisdom.

§ 20. As it is evident from the whole tenor of Scripture, and from the nature of the case, that God acts in these twofold characters towards His rational creatures, it follows, that it is worthy of Him to have corresponding designs. Let us apply this to the mediation of Christ, and the price of redemption. As a Governor, I humbly conceive, His design in this great and glorious medium of happiness was to lay an adequate foundation for every human subject of His government, on which he may hope for the favour of God, and on which he may seek remission of sin, justification, holiness, happiness, in one word, *salvation*, on the terms prescribed, terms worthy of God and our rational nature. But on the rejection or neglect of these terms, the sinner has no one to blame but himself, and the Supreme Ruler will appear clear and glorious when He judges and condemns him for neglecting so great salvation.

§ 21. But when we consider the design of God in the character of a Sovereign, we may regard the same object, the invaluable price of redemption, as an adequate foundation for actually redeeming from all evil those who are eventually saved, and for imparting to them the influence of the Spirit, whereby they comply with the terms proposed, and enjoy the promised blessings. As God does nothing without design, and without an adequate ground for it; and as forming a vital union with Christ, a spiritual renovation by the Holy Spirit, upholding the soul in the midst of temptations and formidable dangers, and finally investing soul and body with eternal life and glory, are the acts of His sovereign pleasure; His design, I apprehend, in substituting the atoning sacrifice was to lay a suitable basis for these acts.

§ 22. Thus the atoning sacrifice is one, unchangeably the same. In whatever light we consider the Divine character, compared with the actual state of mankind it is an adequate basis of reconciliation, and of the Divine proceedings towards them. Viewing them as morally free and accountable agents, what can be desired by them more suitable to their wants? Through this medium they are encouraged, invited, requested, commanded with awful denunciations, to seek pardon and peace, grace and glory, by compliance with the most reasonable terms, by casting away the arms of rebellion, by penitential submission, by cordial belief in the Divine testimony concerning Christ, by returning to their allegiance, and by resigning themselves to the direction and government of Him who has all power in heaven and earth:—"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." But he who obeyeth not the voice of this prophet shall be condemned and cut off:—"These mine enemies, who would not that I should rule over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me."

§ 23. But it is a humbling and awful fact, that man is not only "far gone from original righteousness," but also of his own fallen nature is "inclined to evil." He has a carnal mind, and "the carnal mind is enmity against God." He is "not inclined" to deny himself, to take up his cross and follow Christ, to pluck out the right eye, and cut off the right hand. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, reign over him. But shall the want of inclination, a good will, and a ready mind in man, render the sacrifice of Christ of no effect? God forbid. As a Sovereign, He had a design in laying such a wonderful and glorious foundation, which no blindness, enmity, pride, or wickedness of mankind should frustrate. The sacrifice of Christ shall become the foundation of triumphant grace. For the sake of it, the Redeemer "shall see His seed, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hands." A goodly multitude shall be "made willing in the day of His power." He will slay their enmity by spiritually uniting them to Himself, and at the same time constitute them righteous. They shall submit themselves before Him, deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Him. He puts His fear in their hearts, draws them with the cords of love, and it is "given to them, on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake."

§ 24. Having endeavoured to explain and illustrate what I pre-

sumed to call "the harmonising principle," in reference to the great topic of redemption, I will now advert to his Lordship's declarations on the subject. It is asserted, in the first place, that "the doctrine of universal redemption was directly opposed by Calvin." His Lordship I hope will excuse me for asserting, in return, that this eminent Reformer did *not* "directly" oppose the doctrine of universal redemption in the sense now explained, as far as I have been able to collect by a frequent search into his voluminous writings. He admitted a universal price of redemption; but he had reasons innumerable against the notion of an actual redemption of all men from sin and misery. He maintained that the *remedy* was universal, and that it was universally proposed to mankind, according to God's rectoral design; but not that it was the sovereign design of God by it to make mankind universally and indiscriminately submissive, and compliant with the terms on which the blessings resulting from it were to be enjoyed. Had this been His design, not one of the human race could perish; for "who hath resisted His will?" If God were to design this, and to exert His power on the heart accordingly, who could prevent Him? What Calvin's ill-digested reprobating decree implied *indirectly*, is another consideration.

§ 25. Calvin, however, certainly did "oppose" his Lordship's notion of universal redemption, which we now proceed to examine. The explanatory clauses, indicating what was intended by the phrase "universal redemption," are these:—"namely, that *the benefits* of Christ's passion extend to the *whole human race;* or, that every man *is enabled* to attain salvation through the merits of Christ." If by "*the* benefits" be meant *some* benefits, what Calvinist, ancient or modern, ever denied it? But if by "*the* benefits" be meant *all* the benefits of Christ's passion, surely his Lordship will not deliberately maintain it, as it is "directly opposed," by obvious innumerable *facts*. For instance, a clean heart, a right spirit, justification, adoption, Divine love shed abroad in the heart, being kept by Divine power through faith unto salvation, and introduction to the heavenly Jerusalem, a glorious resurrection, and eternal life,—all these are benefits of Christ's passion; but are they extended to "the whole human race?" If it be said that they are extended conditionally, proposed objectively, or in such a manner that all *may* obtain them, were it not for their own fault; this I have already admitted. But such is the present state of

mankind, that were there no absolute, as well as conditional benefits, it is *possible* that not one human being would in fact be finally saved. With his Lordship's notion of free-will as going before, and turning the balance in every instance, while human nature is "inclined to evil," even in his own sense of this phrase, where lies the *probability*, much less the certainty, of the final salvation of any individual? It is of no use to contend that God will assist mankind IF they will faithfully employ the powers and talents with which they are entrusted, without producing the evidence of probability, at least, that they WILL do this. But was it worthy of Divine wisdom to prepare a kingdom of eternal glory on the precarious basis of free-will exclusively,—on a bare peradventure that some would surmount their native depravity, and thus prepare the way for obtaining efficacious grace? That mankind *ought* to improve their powers and means, is one thing; but that any *will* do so, without the internal, efficacious grace of Christ "going before to give them a good will," is quite another.

§ 26. It is, again, included in his Lordship's notion of universal redemption, "that every man *is enabled* to attain salvation through the merits of Christ." What is the precise import of the word "enabled" in this connexion? If it be that the merits of Christ not only constitute an adequate provision, but also that they are placed within the attainment of every man for his salvation, if it be not his own fault; this is not denied by modern Calvinists, but fully admitted. This, however, is a very unusual acceptation of the term; nor in fact does the use of it in this appear more appropriate than in the following connexions: a man is "enabled" to feed himself and grow healthy, because he has an invitation to an entertainment, and free access, if he please; or, a man is "enabled" to paint a good likeness, because he is presented with all the requisite materials. If, however, the meaning be, that every man is endowed with a suitable disposition, or the requisite ability in point of inclination to good; where is the evidence for such an assumption? If every one be thus well inclined, how comes it to pass that every one does not attain the salvation set before him? Doubtless, "every man" has physical powers adequate to the attainment, and these he has from the bounty of the Creator; but is "every man" so "enabled" as to have "the thoughts and desires of his heart cleansed by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit?" Or is there any sufficient evidence to prove, that any man, since the

beginning of time, attained salvation without it? Did ever any man sincerely desire, and earnestly seek the blessings of salvation, through the merits of Christ, in God's own way, and on His appointed terms, who was not *thus* "enabled" to do so? If these questions could be answered, and proved in the affirmative, something to good purpose might be effected against the Calvinists.

§ 27. If a modern Calvinist uses the terms "possibility" or "impossibility," in reference to the attainment of salvation, we should not immediately infer that a decree of prevention is implied. The actual state of man forms the barrier. That Calvin's notion of a reprobating decree was an unfounded conclusion, will be noticed under the next subject of examination. We are now to advert to his Lordship's remaining argument in favour of universal redemption, in his sense of the term, founded on a comparison between the extent of the evil and the supposed extent of the remedy. If this argument prove anything, it renders itself useless by proving too much on the one hand, and by opposing plain fact on the other. The evil consisted not only in guilt incurred, which might be removed by righteousness, but in great depravity. If, therefore, the remedy were "commensurate to the evil," *all* that depravity which was introduced ought also to be removed. But this proves more than his Lordship can intend, and in reality forms a contradiction; for it would be the same as to prevent that evil which at the same time is supposed to exist. The argument also militates against plain revealed and experienced facts; for much of the evil introduced by Adam's delinquency continues from age to age, and will continue for ever.

§ 28. If the meaning be that the remedy "proposed," though not *applied*, may be expected, from "a Being of infinite power and mercy," to be "commensurate to the evil," it appears from the preceding pages that this is not disputed; and modern Calvinists, both in the Church of England and out of it, give the most cogent proof of this as their prevailing sentiment, by taking a very active part in sending missionaries and Bibles to every quarter of the globe. As the evil is universal, they endeavour, according to the will of God, that the "proposed" remedy should be equally unlimited,—that repentance and remission of sins should be preached among all nations in the name and through the merits of Jesus Christ; but, alas, how few receive the message! for "darkness hath covered the earth, and gross darkness the people." Were the

influence of the Holy Spirit, however, which is an important part of the remedy, conferred upon *every* man, the gospel remedy would experience a far different reception in the world. That "a Being of infinite power and mercy" *could* effect this, as that He could send His Son into the world to become a sacrifice for sin and a price of redemption, and *could* insure the reception of the remedy, and salvation by it, who can doubt? But He is a Being of infinite wisdom and justice as well as of power and mercy.

SECTION II.

The Bishop's avowed Sentiments on PREDESTINATION *and* ELECTION *examined.*

§ 1. The subject stated. § 2–4. That predestination is irreconcilable with Divine goodness and justice, examined. § 5–7. A reprobating decree is not implied in non-election. § 8. Nor in preterition. § 9. The non-predestinated are not denied, repulsed, or hindered. § 10. Remarks on the term reprobation. § 11–13. An inquiry why Calvin and some others inferred a *decree* of reprobation, and preterition, or non-election. § 14, 15. The notion of a voluntary restriction of prescience considered. § 16–20. Whether there be any other ground of *certain* futurition besides a Divine decree, discussed. § 21. Inferences from the preceding discussion. § 22, 23. That we cannot reconcile prescience with other Divine perfections; and, § 24. With free-agency, examined. § 25. That the actions of free agents are only *permitted*, examined. § 26, 27, His Lordship's account of Divine decrees and appointments, and of election, examined.

§ 1. THE remarks made by his Lordship on the subject under present examination are so numerous, that it is no easy task to reduce them to any general heads. However, the most prominent are the following:—That predestination is irreconcilable with the Divine goodness and justice; that absolute election and reprobation are inseparable; that we cannot reconcile prescience with other Divine attributes and free-agency; that the actions of free agents are only permitted; that God did appoint the power of believing and obeying to *all* who hear the gospel, but did not appoint that the benefits of Christ should be enjoyed by *some only;* that the prescience of our being ordained to eternal life is founded on our compliance; that the idea of a covenant is inconsistent with the Calvinistic system; that there was no difference between Judas and the other apostles, except good works; that an exhortation to walk worthily is incompatible with certainty and salvation; that the general terms of God's love are irreconcilable with His electing some, and leaving others to perish; that election is not confined to those who will actually be saved; that to choose in Christ is to make known the gospel of Christ; that the "predestination" of the 17th Article is God's gracious purpose to make a conditional offer of salvation to men; and, finally, that

Calvinistic election is disclaimed and condemned in the strongest terms in the 17th Article.

§ 2. In the first place, his Lordship supposes that predestination is irreconcilable with Divine goodness and justice. "I reject the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination, not because it is incomprehensible, but because I think it *irreconcilable* with the justice and goodness of God."* In another place, it is said, "It is not denied that God had a *right*, founded on the uncontrollable will of the Creator over His creatures, to consign the far greater part of men to eternal misery, and to bestow eternal happiness on a chosen few, although there was in themselves no ground whatever for such distinction. But the question is, whether such a conduct would have been consistent with infinite justice and infinite mercy."† This last quotation appears to me very singular, and very objectionable, as containing the most exceptionable part of hyper-Calvinism! That must be a very anomalous and strange kind of "right" which is not consistent with *infinite justice*. If men were consigned to eternal misery without *desert*, and this founded in right, what is it but saying that the Creator had a *right* to be *unjust?* But if men so consigned *deserved* it by previous delinquency, how would it be inconsistent with *justice?* Is it not of the essence of justice to give to every one his due? To ascribe to the Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor of His creatures a right, an "*arbitrary*" right of conferring benefits upon them beyond their due, is infinitely worthy of Him; but to ascribe to Him the same right to render the undeserving miserable, is to offer Him a compliment which he must needs reject with infinite disdain,—a *right* to be *unjust*, were He not infinitely just, good, and merciful.

§ 3. But what is the predestination of modern Calvinists, and how is it irreconcilable with the justice and goodness of God? What we maintain is, that all mankind are in a state of guilt and sinful imbecility,—that God foresaw this from eternity,—that He therefore predestinated an adequate remedy in the sacrifice of Christ,—that this should be announced to men, as commensurate to the evil. We further maintain that there was not in the present state of man any ground of certainty that any one, without preventing gracious influence, would avail himself of the proposed remedy; and, therefore, that God *predestinated*, under the

* Refutation, p. 252. † Ibid., pp. 258, 259.

direction of infinite wisdom, to influence the hearts of some—*i.e.*, those who are finally glorified—to repent, believe, obey, and persevere in a holy course, as the way to everlasting happiness. Heaven is the end, but holy obedience is the way to it. We hold no predestination that separates the end and the means. We do not presume to conjecture, *à priori*, who are predestinated to eternal life; but rather infer, from the imbecility of man, that if any one is penitent, faithful, diligent, persevering, and finally glorified, these great effects are from the special and distinguishing energy of God; and that whatever He does in time He purposed to do from eternity. This is our predestination.

§ 4. And what is there in this "irreconcilable with the justice and goodness of God?" Is it unjust to shew favour to the unworthy? We own it is not the proper *effect* of justice, but this is far from implying that it is unjust. Mercy, a species of Divine goodness, is sovereign; but to confer a favour arbitrarily, under the direction of wisdom, does injury to no one. If God were just *only*, there would be no room for mercy. If He had not a *right* to act the part of a sovereign benefactor, there could have been no plan of redemption and salvation. What is required by justice, is to give to every one his due; but in the plan of redeeming mercy, justice is honoured, while "grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." In this Calvinistic predestination, therefore, it is difficult to find even the semblance of infringement of either justice or goodness. It is not inconsistent with *goodness*, that some should be made holy and happy, who did not deserve it; nor inconsistent with *justice*, that God should "have mercy on whom He will have mercy."

§ 5. In the next place, his Lordship maintains, that absolute election and reprobation are "*inseparable*." That Calvin and other eminent divines before and after him have drawn this *inference* is allowed, as their writings testify; and it is equally manifest that their opponents have seized the concession with avidity and triumph. But if the concession has been erroneously made, which I am fully satisfied was the case, and shall endeavour to substantiate, the strongest objection ever made to the doctrine of Calvinistic election falls. While a decree of reprobation, preterition, or non-election, is admitted, as the inseparable concomitant of a decree of election, it is not to be wondered at that the latter should have so many opponents, or that the Bishop of Lincoln should

be of the number. "If reprobation be unfounded, which some modern Calvinists allow, it follows, upon their own principles, that election is also unfounded, since the latter *cannot exist* without the former."* "'So that,' says Dr Whitby, 'there is *no possibility of asserting* one of these decrees, without owning the other also; and so whatsoever argument holds good against an absolute decree of reprobation, must certainly destroy the opposite decree of absolute election.'" †

§ 6. It might appear an adventurous attempt to encounter what Dr Whitby, and with him the Bishop of Lincoln, deem impossible; or to assert that "which there is *no possibility* of asserting." But the reader will be pleased to recollect, that many things have been for a time considered as impossible paradoxes, which after all were great truths, and which have been fairly demonstrated to be such. For want of patient investigation and the use of proper means, with which God has furnished us, we are too apt to pronounce one thing unfathomable, and another impossible to be surmounted, as a person in a labyrinth asserts that "there is no possibility" of his getting out of it. Many, for example, throw into the way of truth such a stumblingblock as the following:—"Let us suppose the number of mankind to be two millions of men: if out of these, one million only, by the decree of election, be infallibly appointed to eternal life, and these certainly and absolutely distinguished from others, not only as to their number, but their persons also; who can deny, but that one million also, and those certain as to their persons, are as absolutely comprised under the *decree* of non-election or reprobation, as the others were under the decree of election and predestination?" As this argument, borrowed by his Lordship to refute Calvinism, contains a summary of many scattered objections, I shall now attempt to shew its fallacy.

§ 7. In the first place, it takes for granted, what can never be proved, that non-election implies a *decree*. Non-election is a negative idea, *not* electing; but to decree a negation is as absurd as to decree nothing, or to *decree not-to-decree*. The notion of decreeing to *permit* involves the same absurdity; for to permit, in this connexion, is not to hinder: but to decree not-to-hinder is the same as to decree to-do-nothing, or, as before, to decree not-to decree. The fallacy consists in the supposition that non-election is a positive idea, and therefore requires a positive determination,

* Refutation, p. 256. † Ibid., p. 255.

by way of decree. The truth of the case is, that on supposition of one million being elected to holiness as the means, and happiness as the end, the other million is not elected to holiness and happiness. These two things are as opposite as doing and not doing, but to suppose an infinitely perfect Being to *decree* what He does *not do*, is incompatible; for it supposes Him to decree to do what He decrees not to do. It is indeed perfectly scriptural and rational to say, that whatever is done by an infinitely wise Being is done according to *design*, an unvarying purpose, which is commonly termed a decree; but what meaning can there be in His designing to do the contrast to His doing?

§ 8. The same reasoning is applicable to *preterition*. The mind, without due attention to caution, is liable to be deceived by the fallacy which attaches a positive idea to the term, or the thing intended by it. We are disposed, by common associations, to conclude that as to pass by is an *act* of a person, so the *object* passed by requires a designed determination for that purpose. But this is a fallacious conclusion. When a shepherd, for instance, passes by a number of sheep, and fixes upon one, a voluntary act of choosing that one does not imply another voluntary act to pass by the others. He knows all alike, and his wisdom suggests the object of his choice, and this object he actually chooses; the others he passes by; but what is thus expressed by a positive term, implies nothing positive with respect to the objects. They are no more affected by it than they are by simple knowledge and wisdom. Thus we suppose the Divine Shepherd of Israel knows all mankind with infinite precision. He sees them in a wandering and deplorable state; and as they are rational and accountable beings, He pities their condition, and makes adequate provision for their wants by a Mediator. He causes the appointed remedy to be proclaimed as glad tidings; and He orders this gospel of the kingdom to be preached to all these creatures, among all nations, for the obedience of faith. We also suppose, that not one is *of himself* so inclined to good as to repent heartily and believe with unfeigned faith; in short, that no one is so well disposed, in himself considered, as to comply with the terms or conditions proposed, though perfectly equitable and highly advantageous. Hence we suppose, that no other mode is left for securing a flock of true converts who will devote themselves to God in order to serve Him in righteousness and true holiness, but those whom He draws with

the cords of love. His wisdom dictates whom to discriminate, though alike destitute of claim on His mercy; and for a reason worthy of Himself, though to us inscrutable, He effectually renews their hearts, by which they are rendered willing and able to comply with the terms required. They repent, believe, obey, persevere in a holy life, and enter into bliss; blessings which they would never have enjoyed if left to themselves, or without discriminating mercy. This discriminating favour, including the means as well as the end, is Divine election.

§ 9. Were we to maintain that any are *denied, repulsed,* or any way *hindered* from participating in the same blessings, on their compliance with the terms proposed, there would be indeed a just ground of complaint, as it would imply a positive act of refusal, in opposition to just claim,—a claim founded on fulfilling a condition graciously proposed. But this is not the case; we hold no such opinion. This would be unworthy a good, gracious, merciful, and just Being. Even for a *good* desire to be *repulsed* involves incompatible ideas; for all good is from God, and therefore all good desires: but for an infinite good to repel and refuse good, is absurd. All the good, the virtue, and the holiness in the universe is from God ultimately; therefore must needs be approved by Him. Into our notion, therefore, of preterition and non-election nothing positive in the way of resistance enters; and we suppose that the objects who are *not* elected are no more affected by non-election than by mere knowledge,—*simplex intelligentia, quæ ponit nihil in esse.*

§ 10. The term *reprobation* is more equivocal, being used in different connexions to denote different ideas. Some have used it to signify the positive idea of rejection, as an arbitrary act of will; others consider it as synonymous with preterition and non-election—still in the positive sense; and some, as denoting rejection by an act of justice: while others make it to signify a simple act of disapproval, irrespective of demerit. The use of words is an arbitrary and often a capricious thing; but not so ideas. The first idea appears to me unworthy of the Divine character, as before explained; the second has been shewn to be a fallacy; the third identifies it with an exercise of justice; and the fourth makes it an act of the same quality with the first, but not to the same degree. In no other sense can I conceive the phrase "a decree of reprobation" admissible than as it denotes a determination either to

reject unjust claims, or to devote to misery persons *as wicked*, which is the third idea; and to this our opponents can have no objection.

§ 11. Here I would propose, with becoming deference, an inquiry, how the celebrated Reformer, Calvin, and many others who hold the doctrine of election, so readily concluded that a decree in favour of some implied a decree of reprobation in any sense but as an exercise of justice towards the wicked. And this I conceive to be, their assuming as an undoubted truth, that there is no other assignable adequate cause of any event besides the Divine will. But when pressed with the striking consequence of this maxim, that it made God the author of sin, they invented the distinction between a decree to *effect* and a decree to *permit*. This, however, was only a verbal subterfuge; for it still ascribed the *cause* of sin to the decree and will of God. When pressed further on the subject, how it can be worthy of an infinitely good and benevolent Being to *permit* sin by a *decree*, they have been found to confess, that what is evil in the perpetrator is good in the decreer. *His* end in so doing, they have pleaded, is to promote the highest ultimate good; but the *sinner's* end is self-gratification. This mode of reasoning, however, can never remove the odium cast upon the decreer of evil, by whatever words, or in whatever shape, the idea of decree may be represented. Much ingenuity and subtlety may be shewn in attempting, on that assumption, to clear the Divine character; but after all, the cloud remains, and on such principles ever will remain; and if we are acquainted with none better, a modest retractation, and a humble acknowledgment of our ignorance, is the most pious and becoming conduct.

§ 12. But it will be said, by those who endeavour to satisfy themselves with the notion, that every event, the sinfulness of an act not excepted, requires a decree, If we reject this principle, we shall be obliged to adopt an acknowledged absurdity,—*i.e.*, that there may be an effect without an adequate cause. Or must we, it may be asked, admit two eternal principles, one good and the other bad? Certainly not; for this would lead us to endless contradictions. The idea of eternal evil is the most senseless of all others; for what is evil but a deviation from or a contrast to good? Were there not a first absolute good, evil would be an utter impossibility. To every mind that duly reflects, the notion of eternal evil must appear to overturn itself. Is there then, it may be further asked,

any medium between this delirium of the Persians and Manichees, and the admission of God's decree or fixed purpose as the cause of every effect? Is it the human *will* when human actions which God disapproves are in question? It is conceded, that there is certainly no human action displeasing to God, where the human will is not employed; but what disposes that will to act in opposition to the will of its Maker and Preserver?

§ 13. If there be not some OTHER cause to which this may be ascribed, we are reduced to one of these considerations—that a cause opposes itself; or, that there is an effect without a cause. But where shall we find an adequate cause? Is it contingence? What *is* contingence? It will be probably answered, that a contingent being or event is what may or may not happen according to free-will. Granted; but it also follows, that in this sense every being is contingent except the first, who does not owe His existence to free-will,—as every other being may be or may not be, according to the free-will of the Creator. And as to events, there is not one which is not, in this respect, contingent; for, antecedently, it might not have been. Either the interposing will of God might have prevented it by a miracle, or the secondary agent might have been annihilated. If by a contingent event be meant that which is not known until it takes place; then it follows, that what is foreknown is *not* contingent to him who does foreknow it, though it may be so to others.

§ 14. Can anything, in this respect, be contingent to God? Is He not infinite intelligence itself? Some indeed have strangely fancied, that though He *might* foreknow every event before it takes place if He pleased, yet that He does not *choose* to know it. But is not His *knowledge* of all things, both in Himself and out of Himself, an infinite perfection? What can be more fanciful than the notion of an infinite perfection being abridged, or limited by an act of choice? If so, any other perfection may be limited. And if limited in *some* degree, why not in a still further degree, until nothing of it be left! Absolute infinity limited by will! Yet it may be said, that God *can do* all things, if He pleased to exert His omnipotence; but He does not choose to exert it to the utmost. That He can do all things which do not involve a contradiction, is very true; but to suppose that He *can* limit an essential perfection of His nature, is surely the grossest contradiction. The idea of omnipotence is one thing, but the *exertion* of

power is another. The former, like intelligence, is an infinite perfection of the Divine nature, and therefore cannot be limited by will, any more than the Divine existence. The idea of power exerted *ad extra* stands related to a limited object; and as the idea of a limited object excludes infinity, the exertion of power cannot be infinite; for it implies a power to produce infinite effects,—that is, effects equal to the first cause, and as numerous as there are objects of power! Still it may be said, that the *attribute* of knowledge is not limited, but its *exercise*. But is there any conceivable medium between knowledge and ignorance? And a voluntary ignorance, if in this case it were possible, is of all others the worst.

§ 15. Knowledge is essential to wisdom, and to be voluntarily ignorant is a voluntary limitation of wisdom. Is it, then, conceivable that the all-wise God either would or could be voluntarily unwise? Besides, the right exercise of power implies knowledge; and if that exercise be infinitely right, how can this consist with a voluntary ignorance? If the Divine knowledge do not include all beings and events, His designs (if on the supposition He could have any) may be continually frustrated; and if it do not include all *possibles*, how could *any* design be infinitely wise, since it possibly might be wiser? In short, the fallacy lies in this false assumption—that knowledge is an *active* principle; which is in fact to identify it with power. The moment we conceive a possible change in Divine knowledge, were it indeed compatible, we must borrow the idea of power to effect it; that is, we must borrow one attribute in order to lessen another! In short, there is no end to the absurd consequences of a sentiment which now struggles for popularity as an instrument to oppose Calvinism. I must, however, do justice to the Bishop of Lincoln by observing, that this does not appear to be his avowed opinion; and an apology might be made to the reader for detaining him in making an exposure of it, were it not that it contributes to my design to expose false principles which are levelled against modern Calvinism.

§ 16. We know, from the most unequivocal testimonies of Scripture, as well as from the nature of infinite perfections, that God does foreknow future events which are to *us* contingent, otherwise how could the free determinations of men and devils be accurately foretold through the whole system of prophecy? Now, the question returns, *Can* there be any principle of certainty beside the

Divine decree? Must not the Divine *will* be the ultimate source of all certainty? No. But before I assign my direct reason for this laconic answer, let me be allowed to ask another question: Is the Divine will the ultimate source of a mathematical point? This is neither matter nor spirit, neither substance nor form. It has neither length, breadth, nor thickness; it has neither thought, consciousness, nor, in brief, any positive being: it is a mere relative nothing; it is negation of length, breadth, and thickness, as related to something that has these properties. Yet will any say that it is not a source of certainty? Rather, what can be more certain than many mathematical conclusions drawn from this negative idea? Without the idea of a mathematical point, we can have no idea of a mathematical line, and, consequently, of a circle, a triangle, a square, or any other diagram; but by the admission of this *nonentity* as it stands *related* to dimensions, we have demonstrations of the highest certainty.

§ 17. This, however, is but a specimen of a negative principle inseparably related to every portion of the created universe. Were I to say that a negative principle pervades every portion of created existence, some minds, led away by fancy rather than corrected by judgment, might connect with the positive term a positive idea. Language was first formed on the principles of sense and physical nature, where so much positive energy is discoverable; and the further we remove from these appearances, to abstraction of thought for instance, and to negative ideas especially, it is scarcely possible to employ terms by which we are not liable to be misguided, if not attended with either settled definitions, or frequent explanation of the meaning intended to be conveyed by them. Language, however, is of arbitrary appointment; and it is a pitiable prejudice, too often indulged, that thoughts must be governed by words, as if these were the unerring standard of accurate conception, or that the mind was made for language, and not language for the mind.

§ 18. If there be in every created being a *negative principle*, itself not created, and if such negative principle may be an adequate reason of certainty, then a Divine decree of what is good does not *necessarily* imply that any real evil in the universe (of which there is much) is *decreed;* nor does it follow that a Divine decree of election is "inseparable" from a decree of reprobation, in the obnoxious sense of the term. That there *is* in every created

being a negative principle which is itself no created object, is necessarily implied in the negative ideas of limitation and dependence. No proof is required to shew that a creature, however exalted, is limited in his being and properties; and it is as evidently impossible that he should be otherwise, as it is to multiply absolute infinities. It is no honour to the Deity to suppose that He *can* create an unlimited being; for, in reality, to assert that this cannot be done, is the same thing as to assert that God alone is absolutely infinite. It is equally clear that this limitation is a negative idea, implying a comparative defect,—and no one will affirm that negation, or defect, as related to the created object, is itself created,—because whatever is created must have a positive existence. It cannot be denied, again, that such limitation involves innumerable certainties. It is certain, for instance, from the very idea of limitation, that a creature *will not* do a great variety of things. The same remarks are applicable to the negative idea of dependence.

§ 19. Now, seeing innumerable certain consequences *may* arise from negative considerations, and these negations are no objects of creating power, though the beings to which they stand related are so, it follows that some events may be certain which are not decreed, and, if certain, may be foreknown as such. Thus God may foreknow a sinful *defect*, without decreeing it, though He has created and therefore decreed the being in whom the defect is found. He may foreknow the defects of ignorance, moral weakness, and sinful neglect, which are no objects of His power, and consequently of His decree, though the persons to whom these sinful defects are attached are the objects both of His power and purpose; and who can consistently doubt, that what He *may* know, He actually *does* know. Now, as certain and certainly foreknown consequences may be the necessary result of a negative principle involved in the ideas of limitation and dependence, the idea of a decree is excluded from these consequences, as involving the notion of doing what is superfluous. Impute to God the decreeing of that which is certain to take place (as that a dependent and limited creature will *not* do some things) without a decree, and you impute folly to infinite wisdom.

§ 20. But, on the other hand, human persons and faculties, though limited and dependent, have a *positive* existence; nor can it admit of a doubt that certain consequences may arise from a

positive principle. Such a principle is the first cause, without whose energy (and, consequently, purpose) no positive effect can possibly take place. Hence it follows that whatever is positive in any human act is from God, as its energetic cause, and is therefore good: but whatever is negative in the same is not from God, and therefore not good, because He is the only source of good, and of good only; for to say that any evil proceeds from infinite good, is precisely the same thing as to say that it is not evil. Before we can assert that no moral evil is attached to human beings in our world, we must deny not only the testimony of the inspired writings, but also that of our consciences: and to assert that sin, or the sinfulness of actions, is a positive thing, is to make God the ultimate cause of it; which is virtually to assert that it is a *good* thing.

§ 21. From the whole of the preceding considerations, I humbly conceive we may safely infer the following particulars:—1. That there are negative principles of consequences which are infallibly certain; and, therefore, that there are some events which come to pass without a decree. 2. That a decree to elect some in wisdom and mercy, while not even a good thought or desire of any one is opposed, but rather approved, does not imply a decree of non-election. 3. That all the good in the created universe is from the will, and, consequently, the decree or purpose, of God; because good effects can have no other adequate cause. 4. That no evil in the universe is decreed by a Being of infinite goodness and benevolence; because this would be to oppose Himself. 5. That the laws of physical nature, the moral law, and the operations of justice, are in themselves good, though the innocent occasions of evil to individuals. 6. That all holiness and happiness in creatures are foreseen, because the effects of Divine energy and purpose, inasmuch as whatever God effects He designs, and what He designs He must needs foresee. 7. That evil which is unworthy of God to effect, and, consequently, to purpose, is foreseen in its negative principle, which is not *from* God, though *related* to creatures and their actions which it is worthy of Him to create and support. 8. That the real origin of moral evil is a negative principle as related to a positive and active being—viz., a free agent in search of happiness. 9. That the Divine sovereign power could prevent moral evil in every instance, or remove its effects, but that such a prevention and removal are not in all cases consistent with

God's infinite wisdom, and with the glory of His perfections,—a position which is abundantly confirmed from Scripture testimony and plain facts. 10. That the doctrine of election, as before stated, is founded on two principles: first, the foreseen insufficiency of sinful creatures to secure their own happiness; and, secondly, the sovereign mercy of God, under the direction of supreme wisdom,—inscrutable by creatures, of whatever order, and in whatever state,—resolving to effect *that* for its objects which His infinite knowledge foresaw they would not effect of themselves, however suitable the means offered them, or strong the objective inducements. 11. The final inference is, that the predestination or election here maintained, and which I consider as precisely the same with what is expressed in the 17th Article, is infinitely worthy of the Divine character and perfections.

§ 22. It is now time to advert to his Lordship's assertion, that we cannot reconcile *prescience* with other Divine attributes and with *free-agency*. His words are:—"We are utterly incapable of comprehending how God's prescience consists with the other attributes of the Deity, and with the free-agency of man."* It is the part of Christian humility to acknowledge that there are innumerable things which we cannot comprehend; and the remark might be extended to the most exalted of created intelligences. There are, however, many things which we may sufficiently apprehend for the purposes of piety and useful practice; and it becomes us to be cautious how we fix our own capacity or incapacity as the standard for all others, or even for ourselves. What we know not now we may know hereafter, even in this life, if divinely taught. God is the fountain of wisdom; and "who teacheth like Him?" He can not only present the objects, (the utmost that other teachers can do,) but bestow the capacity to learn; and where He does this, it is not humility but ingratitude to disown it.

§ 23. God is infinitely wise, and, therefore, knowing; but what attribute of the Deity has even the appearance of being inconsistent with this acknowledged fact? It is acknowledged that *prescience* is included in infinite knowledge: I ask again, what attribute even *appears* to be inconsistent with it? Is it goodness, or holiness, or justice, or mercy? But is it not most apparently consistent, that an infinitely good and holy, just and merciful Being, should have a perfect knowledge of all beings and events,

* Refutation, p. 252.

which we call past, present, and future? It seems to me an undeniable truth, for which evidence has been produced, that all the *good* in the created universe, of every description, is the effect of God's will and purpose, His power and energy. How consistent, then, with all His attributes, that He should foreknow everything He effects! Again, all evil, properly so called, results from a negative principle, which neither is nor can be the object of will or of Divine causation, though related to what is so. Now, is there any appearance of inconsistency between a Divine attribute—as justice, mercy, &c.—and the *prescience* of events in their adequate causes? What can be more consistent with the attributes of the Deity, than that He should perfectly foreknow what His creatures ought to do, according to the capacities, powers, means, and opportunities which He would give them; and what they would not do in some circumstances, as well as what they would do in others?

§ 24. But, it may be said, the chief difficulty consists in comprehending the consistency between the Divine prescience and the *free-agency* of man. Granted; but it does not appear to be an insurmountable difficulty, except when the solution is attempted on false principles. Adopt the true, and the difficulty vanishes. We all agree in the idea of agency in general, but probably not in the idea of freedom. The last term, in my conception, is properly and consistently expressive of a *negative* idea—not a power, nor a faculty, but *exemption* related to the will. But, as in the view of infinite intelligence nothing can be fortuitous or contingent, though many things are so to limited knowledge; and as all knowledge implies a ground of it; and as every event has for its ground either an efficient or deficient cause; and as all causes, both efficient and deficient, are equally clear to the Divine mind,—what appearance of inconsistency is there between prescience and free-agency? If, indeed, we adopt the false principle of free-will having *no cause* of its determination, either efficient or deficient, the difficulty of reconciliation will be insurmountable, and it may be justly said, "we are incapable of comprehending it." Who is capable of comprehending the truth of a false principle, or the harmony of error with Divine verity? But if all the good determinations of free-will proceed from a good principle of which God is the author; and all evil determinations from a negative principle related to what is good, as the human will is, in itself

considered; the consequence is conclusive, that it would be unworthy of every Divine attribute, and especially prescience, to suppose that any determination of the free agent is not foreseen. True principles may give us a knowledge that is clear and decisive, if the fault be not in ourselves; but erroneous principles never can. With the latter we may perplex ourselves and others for ever; but with the former we may arrive at certainty and repose.

§ 25. We are again told by the Bishop, that the actions of free agents are only *permitted*:—"The actions of free agents can only be said to be *permitted* by God." This, as a general assertion, is highly exceptionable. That this is the case as to the fall "of Adam and every other human transgression of the Divine will," is not doubted; but with what propriety can the general assertion be applied to the *good* actions of free agents? Are these only *permitted?* Does not the page of inspiration expressly declare, respecting the good result, that "God worketh in us both to will and to do of His own good pleasure?" What is it less than a perversion and confusion of language, as well as of ideas, to make *permitting* and *working* synonymous? Is it consistent with Christian or scientific moral principles to suppose that fallen man will do good, if only permitted, or not hindered? We cease to wonder that any writer, though adorned with various knowledge and erudition, holding an opinion like this, should so frequently fall into inconsistencies with himself, as well as with Divine truth. Surely the actions of free agents have a *cause*, an adequate cause, as well as all other effects in the universe; but is there any adequate cause of good actions beside good principles? or of these, beside Divine efficiency? Free-will without *some* cause, and a free-will to good without a *good* cause, are notions worthy of a bad cause, and of a worse name than I shall permit myself to bestow on them.

§ 26. His Lordship further avows it as his opinion, that God did *appoint* the power of believing and obeying to *all* who hear the gospel, but did *not* appoint that the benefits of Christ should be enjoyed by *some only*:—"To send Christ into the world that mankind might be saved, was indeed the *eternal purpose* of God—this He decreed from the beginning; but, in making this decree, He did *not appoint* that the benefits of Christ's mission should be enjoyed by certain individuals only, but that they should extend to all who believed and obeyed; and that every one to whom the gospel should be made known should have the *power* of be-

lieving and obeying. There was *no absolute* election of *particular persons* who must necessarily be saved, but a conditional offer of salvation to all." * In this paragraph, as in several others of the same tendency, there appears to me a singular mixture of truth and error. I regard it, with his Lordship, as a great TRUTH, that it was the eternal purpose of God to send Christ into the world, that mankind might be saved; and, moreover, that the benefits of His mission should extend to all who believed and obeyed. It is also a great TRUTH, that every one to whom the gospel should be made known should have the power—that is, the means, the opportunity, the privilege—of believing and obeying if he pleased; so that the fault is exclusively in himself if he does not believe and obey. But some part of the passage quoted appears to me very remote from "sound speech that cannot be condemned."

§ 27. "No *absolute* election of particular persons who must necessarily be saved, but a *conditional offer* of salvation to all." That there is in the gospel a conditional offer made to all addressed by it, is not the point in dispute; but whether any *perform* the condition, without being chosen and disposed with a peculiar discrimination. According to his Lordship's theological sentiments, millions of the human race "who are of their own nature inclined to evil," not only *can* but certainly *will* perform the required conditions of repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, without any other assistance but what is common to all. The degeneracy is alike in all, and the assistance is the same; but one man makes *himself* to differ from another. Nobody doubts that one man does differ from another, that the penitent differs from the impenitent, the believing from the unbelieving, the obedient from the disobedient; the question is, whence does the difference originate? This difference is an important *good*, but is there any good of which God is not the source? It is granted, again, that believing, repenting, and obeying are *voluntary* acts; but is there any ground of certainty and foreknowledge of a *good-will* without preventing grace, or a Divine principle imparted from the Father of lights? "Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth." To deny particular persons to be the subjects of special grace, and of an election for this purpose, is to limit the free operation of mercy, and to measure infinite wisdom by our own standard. "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as

* Refutation, p. 244.

thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes." All election is to benefit the creature; but who shall say to infinite beneficence, "Hitherto shalt thou go, but no further," when one is favoured beyond his just claims, and when no one has less than his due?

Section III.

The same subject continued.

§ 1–4. That the prescience of being ordained to eternal life is *founded* on our compliance, examined. § 5–9. That the idea of a *covenant* is inconsistent with the Calvinistic system, examined. § 10, 11. That absolute decrees *reject* all conditions, examined. § 12. The same event may be absolutely decreed in one respect, and conditionally in another. § 13–15. This exemplified in the mediation of Christ. § 16. Inferential remarks from the discussion of a decree, a covenant, and a condition. § 17. That an *exhortation* to walk worthily is inconsistent with *certainty* of salvation, examined. § 18–20. The idea of *motive* considered. § 21. Exhortation to diligence an essential part of the motive. § 22, 23. That an infallible decree cannot be made *sure*, examined. § 24. The doctrine of motives recapitulated. § 25, 26. General conclusions drawn. § 27–30. That the predestination of the 17th Article is God's purpose to make a *conditional offer* of salvation, examined. § 31–34. That Calvinistic election is disclaimed and *condemned* in the 17th Article, examined. § 35, 36. That there was *no difference* between Judas and the other apostles, except good works, examined. § 37, 38. That the general terms of God's love, are irreconcilable with His *leaving some* to perish, examined. § 39. That election is not confined to those who will *actually* be saved, examined.

§ 1. We are again told, that the prescience of our being ordained to eternal life is founded in our compliance:—"It being the declared will of God, that none to whom the gospel was made known should obtain eternal life who did not believe, and God *foreseeing who would believe*, it might be said, that those believed who were ordained to eternal life; that is, those *who God foresaw would comply* with the ordained condition of faith in Christ, upon which eternal life was offered."* "In opposition to the Calvinists, I have there ['Elements of Christian Theology'] represented predestination as *founded* in foreseen obedience and disobedience; and I have added, This appears to me the only sense in which predestination is *reconcilable* with the attributes of God and the free-agency of man."† Here are supposed effects—viz., believing, complying, obedience, and disobedience. But every effect must have an adequate cause. That there is an adequate cause of disobedience, as of every evil, has been proved before; but where

* Refutation, p. 234. † Ibid., pp. 251, 252.

shall we find an adequate cause of the other effects? It will be probably answered, in free-will. Freedom, as pertaining to the will, it has been shewn, is a mere negation or exemption, which in the nature of things can have no positive effects; but believing, complying, &c., *are* positive effects; consequently, all must be reduced to will. That this may be a secondary cause of positive effects, is granted; and also the innocent occasion of the sinfulness of actions; but if will, in man, be the deciding cause of his actions, and nothing more, how comes it to pass that this cause, which is found in every man, does not produce the same kind of effects? for it is an acknowledged axiom, That like causes produce like effects.

§ 2. If it be said that this axiom belongs only to physics, but not to morals, I have a right to demand of the objector a reason of the difference, without his begging the question. No such reason, however, I am satisfied, can be given. If there be no other cause beside free-will, this palpable absurdity is the consequence, that the same cause produces contrary effects, or, which is no better, that one of the effects is without a cause. God's infinite knowledge, and consequently His foreknowledge, sees all effects in their adequate causes; but how can the same thing be an adequate cause of opposite effects? To recur to the arbitrary nature of the human will, as the image of the arbitrary will of God, is an assumption without proof that there is any such will in the Deity. For will any one seriously avow, that such is the arbitrary nature of the Divine will, that it *may* do evil, as well as good? How much more worthy of supreme excellence is the sentiment, that the Divine will cannot be so arbitrary as not to have an *adequate cause* of its determinations—viz., the perfect rectitude and infinite wisdom of the Divine nature. The absolute nature of God excludes all causes of defectibility, and consequently of evil effects; and the same absolute nature infallibly secures the goodness of all the effects it produces. The very nature of God, as absolutely perfect, therefore, is incompatible with that *self-sovereignty* of will in Him to which the human will has been supposed to bear a resemblance. But if it be incompatible with the Divine nature, with how much less reason can it be assumed to be a property of the human will? Indeed, were such a property possible in the nature of things, as a will without any other cause of its determination beside itself, it would be no excellency. Why, then, should it be claimed for the human will?

§ 3. For these reasons, among others, we are constrained to conclude, that every act of the human will, whether good or bad, has a cause or adequate reason of the effect, beside the mere will itself. And if we view the subject in any light whatever, consistent with the nature of God and of the creature, which I would call the nature of things, we are brought constantly and infallibly to this conclusion—that every good will is from a good principle, and therefore from God; and every evil will is from some kind of evil principle, and therefore from ourselves. I said "some kind" of evil principle, in order to distinguish it from a *sinful* principle, which would not be true as a general maxim. For though in fallen creatures there is a sinful principle from which evil effects proceed, it would be a direct contradiction to say that the *first* sin of any being was from a sinful cause or principle. We should, therefore, carefully distinguish between a *morally evil* principle which belongs to depraved creatures, and the merely *defective principle* which alone accounts for the first sinful act or desire.

§ 4. Good acts, therefore, as those enumerated by the Bishop, are not foreseen as springing up of themselves without an adequate cause, but as the effect of holy energy producing them. And a determination to effect this, is to *predestinate* their existence; which is the same thing in substance as is expressed by this grand theological axiom, ALL GOOD IS FROM GOD. If so, how can any one consistently assert that predestination is "*founded* in foreseen obedience?" It is admitted that God determines or predestinates enjoyments to the obedient, and misery to the disobedient; but to say that "this is the *only* sense in which predestination is reconcilable with the attributes of God and the free-agency of man," is extremely objectionable. The πρῶτον ψεύδος, or the radical fallacy of this error, is a gratuitous assumption, that good and evil must proceed from the same identical principle; and it has been adopted by persons of even opposite sentiments. In the one extreme are those who reduce all events to the predestinating will of God; in the other, are those who reduce all moral events, without distinction of good and bad, to the will of man as their ultimate source. Both these extremes, however, pursued to their just consequences, are demonstrably absurd. Neither of them gives unto God the things that are God's, nor unto man the things that are his. The more we investigate the subject without injurious prepossessions, and with a humble mind, the more clearly we shall

perceive that though the human will is the agent, yet the ultimate cause, and the only adequate cause of every *good* effect, is the will of *God*, operating according to His beneficent and infinitely wise nature; and the only ultimate and adequate cause of every bad effect, though, as observed before, the human will is the agent, is a negative principle peculiar to the creature, as inseparably related to it. That there is in every creature such a principle of defectibility, which is, however, under the control of supreme beneficence and wisdom, has been proved before; and that there is no such principle in the self-existent, independent, and all-sufficient Jehovah, needs no proof.

§ 5. His Lordship says, that the idea of a *covenant* is inconsistent with the Calvinistic system:—"God was pleased, both by the law and by the gospel, to enter into covenant with His chosen people, the Jews, and Christians; to promise reward to the obedient, and to threaten punishment to the disobedient. But neither in the law nor in the gospel does He promise certain and infallible salvation, or threaten absolute and inevitable perdition, to any number, or to any description of persons, except as they shall or shall not comply with the expressed conditions. Under both covenants, the rewards and punishments are made to depend upon the voluntary conduct of each individual. The very idea of *covenant* is *inconsistent* with the Calvinistic system. Covenant implies conditions; absolute decrees reject all conditions. A covenant says, You shall have such and such a reward, if you act in the manner stipulated; absolute decrees say, That it is irreversibly determined by the arbitrary will of God, that you shall or shall not be saved, *without any respect to your conduct.*" * Now, setting aside all irritation which might be excited by such a statement of Calvinism,—as our object is truth, and as the best way to it is calm investigation "with meekness and fear,"—let us impartially examine this account.

§ 6. The Calvinists, as a general body, believe that the word *covenant* in Scripture (ברית, διαθήκη, *fœdus*) is used, like most other terms, in different acceptations, according to the subject and connexion. It often denotes a grant of some privilege, as to Noah, Abraham and his posterity, &c.; and sometimes it signifies the sign or seal by which that grant was represented and confirmed, as the rainbow, circumcision, &c.: but most properly an agreement between two or more parties is expressed by it,—an agreement

* Refutation, p. 226.

which is either expressly made or tacitly implied. In this latter sense we consider the existence of a covenant between the Father and the Son, respecting human redemption. We think that our blessed Saviour voluntarily engaging to humble Himself to become incarnate "for us men and for our salvation," and "obedient unto death, the accursed death of the cross," contained the nature of a federal condition, on the performance of which He acquired a right of suretyship to give eternal life to as many as the Father gave Him to be redeemed, to confer "gifts upon men, yea, the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." By His acts of humiliation, from the womb to the grave, being in every step a perfect character, He paid a price of redemption, in virtue of which He is invested with all power and authority in heaven and earth.

§ 7. We also believe that a covenant was *implied* between God and the first man. The condition of it was perseverance in that state of rectitude in which he was created. The first transgression was a breach of covenant; and consequently the favours which depended on the condition were forfeited. The nature of the case excluded the possibility of this or a similar covenant with man to be repeated, except with one who was originally free from sin. Hence the necessity, the conditional necessity, of the immaculate conception of the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, and of His continuing "holy, harmless, and undefiled, separate from sinners;" and hence He received the Spirit without measure, not only for Himself but for others. Out of His fulness, who is made Head over all things to His Church, all His spiritual members receive, "and grace for grace."

§ 8. That God entered into covenant with Abraham and his posterity the Jews, needs no formal evidence. The condition of it was willing obedience; and while the benefits of compliance were many, the threatenings for non-compliance were awful and tremendous. Merciful promises were interwoven with the whole Mosaic code, and in no instance were they exempt from performing the equitable conditions, including faith and repentance, love and obedience. The Christian Church also is dealt with in the way of a covenant, with conditions and sanctions. The basis of it, as addressed to mankind, is Divine mercy testified, in virtue of our blessed Saviour's adequate price of redemption. The conditions are: if we would obtain pardon, it must be on our unfeigned repentance; if we would be justified, it must be on our believing

with the heart God's testimony concerning Jesus; if we would be saved, it must be in the way of unreserved obedience to God's revealed will; if we would be happy, it must be in the way of holiness. This is our notion of a covenant and its conditions. Now, what is there in this Calvinistic system "inconsistent with the idea of a covenant?" The mischief, it seems, lurks out of sight. But what is it? When all were disabled by sin to perform the conditions equitably required, we further hold that some are *enabled* to perform the required conditions by *special favour* and *purpose*. God foresaw that all with one consent would fail in performing them, if left to themselves, with nothing more than promises and sanctions, or a declaration of an all-sufficient Saviour, blessings on compliance, and misery on refusal; and therefore determined that the covenant should not be without effect. "My counsel shall stand, and I will do my pleasure." "He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands."

§ 9. That God was pleased, under different dispensations, "to promise reward to the obedient, and to threaten punishment to the disobedient," is so very plainly taught in Scripture, that no person of common understanding is ever likely to controvert it; beside that the equity of the case carries its own evidence of propriety. Destitute as Calvinists may be of penetration in other things, and especially the moderns, "the enthusiasts of the present day," * they are very willing to admit the idea of a covenant, and of course the "conditions" which belong to it. They also can distinguish between a promise and a purpose; and that the former is never connected, properly speaking, with "certain and infallible salvation" to any who "shall not comply with the expressed conditions." Much less do they suppose that "absolute and inevitable perdition is threatened to any number, or to any description of persons, except as they shall not comply with the expressed conditions." And yet his Lordship roundly asserts that "the very idea of a covenant is inconsistent with the Calvinistic system!" But how? Because he thinks "absolute decrees *reject* all conditions." "Absolute decrees say that it is irreversibly determined by the arbitrary will of God that you shall or shall not be saved, *without any respect to your conduct.*"

§ 10. I am very willing that his Lordship's objections should

* Refutation, p. 171.

have all the force that can be imagined in this argument, without any palliation or concealment, in hope that the answer to it will be received with equal candour. Do absolute decrees "reject" all conditions? It is a plain fact, recorded by Divine inspiration, that God had purposed or "*decreed*" that the crew who sailed with St Paul in his voyage to Rome should, with himself, remain in safety:—"And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cæsar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as he told me." Here is not only a decree, but one *revealed;* but does it "reject all conditions?" No; for St Paul very rationally and *consistently* "said to the centurion and to the soldiers, *Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.*" * If his Lordship supposes that Calvinists cannot distinguish between a conditional and an absolute decree, he may be under a mistake. We believe that the decree, for instance, of creating the first chaos was absolute, for non-existence could furnish no condition. But the decree to *adorn* existing matter was conditional, because without the condition of substance there could be no form. Every series or chain of events decreed implies that one link is to be connected with the other. Nor can we admit that free-will is qualified to charm away or to dissolve this connexion, for these reasons, among many others: first, because the infinite wisdom and power of the Decreer is sufficient to maintain it; secondly, because nothing is decreed by God but good, which is therefore worthy of all His perfections; thirdly, because no link in a chain of events can start into existence and occupy its place without an adequate cause; fourthly, because the will itself (though absolutely free from constraint to evil, as well as restraint from good) is a link of the decreed chain; to which we may add, fifthly, that there is no good volition but what is the effect of a good principle, nor any good principle in a creature but what is from the will of God, and consequently from His purpose or decree.

§ 11. In every series of decreed events, the last of the series, as to the order of operation, is founded on the condition of the orderly existence of the events preceding. Suppose, for instance,

* Acts xxvii. 22 25, 31.

that God has decreed a series of events relative to an individual, the last of which is the enjoyment of Himself in heaven. But this is executed under the indispensable condition of holiness; for "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." He has, therefore, decreed that he shall be holy. But no man can be holy without a vital union to Christ, the true vine, as an indispensable condition. He has, therefore, decreed this union, and every connecting link of events preceding, (worthy of His formation,) till we arrive at His first existence. How, then, can we be said to hold the decree of happiness without conditions?

§ 12. Will any one object, that this series of decreed events is not a *covenant?* I grant it; but the Bishop's objection to our sentiments is that they reject all "conditions," and I have shewn that our view of decrees does not reject all conditions. But it may be said that he admits of conditional decrees, but rejects those that are absolute. I reply, that the same event may be absolutely decreed in one respect, while conditionally in another. Thus human happiness may be absolutely decreed, though the condition of faith and obedience precede it; because the condition itself may be decreed with the same absolute certainty. We do not hold, but rather abhor, the sentiment which his Lordship imputes to us, "that it is irreversibly determined, by the arbitrary will of God, that you shall or shall not be saved, *without any respect to your conduct.*" Our sentiment is, that if it be irreversibly determined by the arbitrary will, or the sovereign pleasure of God, directed by infinite wisdom and mercy, that any one shall be saved, it is no less irreversibly determined that salvation shall be attained by a right conduct. We hold that every preceding step of the means and conditions connected with the end is as absolutely secured by God's decretive will as the end itself.

§ 13. That a *federal condition* is not incompatible with an absolute decree of its fulfilment, which is the precise point in question, is capable of undeniable proof from acknowledged facts. It must be acknowledged that Jesus Christ, by His voluntary obedience unto death, performed a federal condition without which His exaltation could not follow; and yet who will say, that His exaltation was not absolutely decreed? Here is a series of decreed events, the end of which is Christ's heavenly glory; the condition of it was, His perfect obedience unto death; the condition of that, His incarnation. If His incarnation was not absolutely

decreed, neither could His exaltation and glory as Mediator be so decreed. This decidedly proves, not only that one event depending upon another, as an indispensable condition, may be absolutely decreed, or irreversibly determined, but also that an intervening part of the series of events may be a federal condition performed by a voluntary agent, and consequently by the exercise of free-will. If the will of "the man Christ Jesus," than which none could be more free, formed a link in the chain of events, by His voluntary obedience, without which the end, the reward of a glorious exaltation, could not be attained, can any argument be more conclusive than this, that "absolute decrees" *do not* "reject all conditions" of a covenant?

§ 14. If it be urged, that the man Jesus was assisted by His Divine nature to perform the condition, I admit this in its amplest force; nay, further, His human nature *required* that assistance, in order to perform with absolute certainty the stipulated condition; and this proves that an absolute decree to give assistance whereby the condition may be infallibly performed, is *not* "inconsistent with the idea of a covenant." "Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath to the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and *will hold thine hand*, and *will keep thee*, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles."* "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath *anointed* me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified."†

§ 15. On the passages above cited I would offer a few remarks which appear to me to have a strong bearing on the point under discussion. First, that they relate to the Messiah in His federal capacity: secondly, that they express a purpose "irreversibly de-

* Isa. xlii. 5, 6. † Isa. lxi. 1, 2.

termined by the arbitrary will of God," to give assistance for performing the conditions of a covenant, and not merely as a reward upon the performance: thirdly, that the Messiah, thus divinely assisted to perform *His* condition of a stipulated covenant, should also assist others to obtain that holiness which is to them the federal condition of happiness: fourthly, that these prophetic declarations (to which more might have been added) are abundantly confirmed and illustrated by parallel declarations in the New Testament; for there we are assured that "He received not the Spirit by measure," and the very existence of His humanity was from the Holy Spirit by a decretive determination; and yet His assumption of humanity was a part of the federal condition.

§ 16. From these considerations we may safely infer, that Bishop Tomline had not sufficiently considered the subject, nor the sentiments of Calvinists, when he asserted, that "the very idea of a covenant is inconsistent with the Calvinistic system;" and that "absolute decrees reject all conditions," or even "any respect to conduct." We have seen that the decree of an ultimate event may be absolutely certain, though a condition precede it; and that the same remark is applicable to each event in the series. We therefore contend, on the firmest ground, first, that a "decree" of absolute election to glory does not *reject* but include conditional events preceding the ultimate ones; secondly, that Divine, effectual *assistance*, absolutely securing a performance of the conditions by the federates, is perfectly consistent with the idea of a covenant; and, finally, that though pardon, justification, and eternal salvation, be suspended on the conditions of repentance, faith, and obedience to be performed by us, yet the reward may be consistently bestowed, notwithstanding it be "irreversibly determined" by the merciful and wise Jehovah, that His gracious and powerful assistance shall secure the performance of the condition and the ultimate event.

§ 17. His Lordship would fain persuade his readers that an *exhortation* to walk worthily is incompatible with certainty of salvation:—"St Peter says, 'Give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:' therefore the salvation of these elect, of this chosen generation, was so far from being certain that it depended on their own diligence; their 'not falling' was so far from being infallibly decreed, that it depended upon their doing those things which the apostle com-

manded."* Of St Paul, writing to the Ephesians, it is observed, "Instead of representing their salvation as *certain*, he earnestly *exhorts* them to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they were called; *guards* them against those deceits which bring down the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience," &c.† "The Thessalonians, by embracing Christianity, were now enabled to obtain salvation; but that this salvation was not *certain* and infallible is evident from the numerous *exhortations* and *precepts* contained in these epistles."‡ The preceding discussions are virtually a reply to this objection. An exhortation, it is evident, is intended to furnish the person exhorted with a suitable motive of action; and as rational beings are not expected to act without a motive, so the obedience exhorted to, which is a prerequisite to attain the end, requires the exhortation as an essential part of a suitable motive.

§ 18. But so apt are we, when discussing moral and religious subjects, to use terms in a lax and undefined manner, that the following question may be thought by many readers quite superfluous, What is MOTIVE? However, I do not think it superfluous to explain my *own* meaning when I use the term in an argument that requires precision of ideas. By MOTIVE I understand that which actually moves and determines the free-will of an agent to one choice rather than another. Is anything beside the exhortation and the will required to effect this? Yes; for the will, however free, must in its elections either move itself, or be moved by something else, in order to comply with, or to reject the exhortation. If it move itself, it is both the mover and thing moved; that is, it is at once both cause and effect. It has been often imagined by those who oppose Calvinism on this point, that the human will is a self-moving power, resembling the self-moving power of the Divine will, which, as they suppose, has no other cause of its activity and choice than itself; but it appears to me demonstrable, that the Divine will is not of that character. For what is Divine will, in accurate conception, but the medium of power? *Power* therefore moves the Divine will. Even power, however, is never exerted, nor can consistently be conceived to be exerted, without a moving cause. And what can there be in God anterior, as to the order of our conception, to will and power, but His *nature* as infinitely good and wise?

* Refutation, p. 205. † Ibid., p. 207. ‡ Ibid., p. 210.

§ 19. Now, if the Divine will be not a self-moving principle, much less is the human. The human will, as well as the Divine, is the medium of active power, of which God is the proper source, without whose voluntary energy there is no conceivable cause of its continuance. A *self-determining human will,* therefore, is a complete absurdity. But what does actually determine or move it to action? In a word, what is it beside the exhortation that constitutes the *motive?* We have proved it cannot be the will itself; it must, therefore, be some radical principle of prior consideration. The radical source of all active power or agency is God; and this power, as flowing from Him, is good, since nothing but good can possibly proceed from infinite goodness. Nevertheless, this power in a creature, as well as the will, stands *related* to defectibility, and the negative cause of that defectibility, as essential to a limited and dependent being; and the same active power *may* stand related to the indefectibility of God, by participation, in such a manner and degree that the tendency of defectibility may be counteracted. Here, then, we see that the human will, which is a *medium* of power, and the power itself which directs it, stand related to two principles,—the cause of defectibility, and the cause of indefectibility,—but not in the same respect. The cause of the former is inseparable from our limited nature; the cause of the latter is in God, and at *His* disposal, not our own: for to suppose a dependent nature to be *essentially* related to the cause of indefectibility, is the same as to say that indefectibility is essentially related to a defectible being, which is incompatible.

§ 20. Hence we perceive that the human will *may* be the medium of active power in producing good or evil, according as it stands *related* to either of the fore-mentioned principles. While under the influence of God, the cause of indefectibility, the cause must be good; but while under the influence of the cause of defectibility, which is a negative principle, the effect will be evil,—each in a moral sense. The former principle is from God, the latter from ourselves. These are essential constituent parts of motive, in a good or bad choice respectively. The other constituent part of a motive is the objective consideration that solicits the will through the medium of the understanding. If objective considerations constituted the *whole* of a motive, every will would be moved alike; and indeed endless absurd consequences would follow: and, on the other hand, if the principle constituted the

whole of a motive, all "exhortations," persuasions, and solicitations of the will, the heart, or active power, through the medium of the understanding, would be superfluous; which is contrary to universal experience, acknowledged propriety, and the nature of things.

§ 21. The way is now prepared to meet the objections of his Lordship fairly and directly. "*Exhortations*" to diligence, &c., constitute an essential part of motive; for they point out considerations which solicit the will, and which, according to their nature, have a tendency to move it: but these considerations actually move the will, as to compliance or non-compliance, good or evil, according to the nature of the principle, which is the other essential part of the motive. For the exhortation is addressed *alike* to those who are under the influence of each of those essential principles; consequently, if we take away what is common to both, the remainder of the motive in each case will be the principle. If the principle be good, the exhortation to obedience will be successful in proportion; but if the principle be evil, that is, either morally evil or negatively defective, it will not be successful. Without motives, of which objective considerations addressed to the free agent constitute an essential part, the will is not actually moved to choose either good or evil; and where there is no choice of good, there can be no active compliance or obedience. Where there is no compliance with and obedience to the will of God, there can be no arrival at that state of happiness which is the end of obedience. He, therefore, who would be finally blessed, must seek it by obedience to the will of God. Consequently, exhortation is one event in the series of Divine decrees, without which the last, eternal happiness, cannot be rationally expected.

§ 22. The Bishop observes, in a note, that "the apostle could not call upon the Christian converts *to make an infallible decree sure.*"* But why could he not? Even supposing that St Peter did not mean "their calling and election *sure*" in their own apprehension, or to the satisfaction of their own mind, might not the holy "diligence" be a part of the infallible decree, and the apostle's "exhortation" an essential part of the prevailing motive to it? To imagine that the certainty or infallibility of an event rejects those very means which are *appointed* to render that event certain or infallible, is of all conceits the most unreasonable. Sup-

* Refutation, p. 205.

pose it were apprehended by the father of a young man of family and genius in the Established Church, that God had revealed to him His having "infallibly decreed" that his son should be advanced to an archiepiscopal see, through the medium of piety, learning, and worthy conduct; would there be any inconsistency, rather would there not be the utmost propriety and good reason, in the father exhorting the son to piety, learning, and worthy conduct, as things inseparably connected with the ultimate event so much valued; would not his neglect, under the pretence of an infallible decree, be regarded as highly censurable?

§ 23. Yet it may be urged, is it not possible that one person may neglect his duty, or that another may not comply with reasonable motives? What then becomes of a revealed *infallible decree?* This objection is very weak, and the proper answer to it is plain. If the former finally neglect his duty, or the latter through non-compliance finally fail of attaining the end, the event would prove that the supposed revelation was not from God, who is incapable of declaring a future event to be certain, which proves, in fact, to be the contrary. But if the event corresponded with the supposed revelation, it is clear that the duty of the one, and the compliance of the other, were included. God is never at a loss to accomplish His purposes, as all hearts are in His hand, and at His disposal. If He determine to preserve His Church against the gates of hell, to call into His fold the fulness of the Gentiles, or to bring in the scattered seed of Abraham, He can prepare and animate suitable instruments to accomplish His design, and effectually dispose the heart to comply with the exhortations. And a revelation of the *certainty* of such an event would be a powerful motive to any heart subject to His holy influence for a more vigorous exertion in promoting its accomplishment. This was eminently the case with His holy apostles and evangelists. In proportion as they were certain respecting God's fixed purpose to set up a spiritual kingdom among men, or to advance any of the human race to eternal glory, the more ardent was their zeal, and the more unwearied were their endeavours.

§ 24. In the course of this examination, it has been, if I mistake not, abundantly proved—1. That the faculty of will, whether in God or a creature, is not a radical power, but only a *medium* of power. 2. That it is not a self-determining faculty, but is determined by motives. 3. That every motive which determines the free agent to

act, choose, or prefer, consists of two essential parts—viz., the object to be chosen or rejected, and the principle. 4. That the radical principles which determine the character or moral quality of actions as good or bad are two, and can be two only, primarily considered—viz., the negative cause of defectibility, which cannot belong to God; and the positive cause of indefectibility, which belongs to Him essentially. 5. That the influence of the indefectible principle is at the sovereign disposal of God, which influence is no more claimable by the creature than any other favour which is in fact not granted him. 6. That when God is pleased, in goodness and wisdom, to grant this influence to man's heart, that renewal of the heart and mind takes place which constitutes a gracious principle. It follows —7. That as the principle constitutes the whole of the difference in both motives, (the objective part being common to both,) the *successful* effect must be *as* the principle, which is the fruit of Divine gracious operation.

§ 25. Known unto God are all His own operations, all principles produced by them, all negative principles counteracted, all objective means afforded to men, and where any motive will prove efficient, as well as where any inefficient. These are not conjectural opinions, but demonstrable verities. The Holy Scriptures, indeed, furnish the *data*, without which no human ingenuity or power of reasoning could avail us; but with their aid, throwing light on the character of God and the real state of mankind, the conclusions fairly drawn are no less certain than those of mathematical science. And from the whole of this part of the subject, we may draw these general inferences: first, that the Calvinistic doctrine of election is perfectly consistent with exhortations, invitations, cautions, warnings, threatenings, &c.; secondly, that gracious influence, which is at the sovereign disposal of Divine goodness and wisdom, absolutely secures the event, eternal glory, notwithstanding all possible freedom of the agent; thirdly, that personal election originates, not in the free-will of man, but in the good and wise pleasure of God, "that no flesh might glory in His presence;" fourthly, that as personal election does injury to no one, the character of God therein appears infinitely amiable and merciful; fifthly, that the opposers of personal and certain election can obtain no conceivable advantage by any scheme of their own, either as it relates to the character of God, or the happiness of men.

§ 26. Suppose, for argument's sake, that there were no such

thing as personal election; what could be gained by the supposition? Would no men continue wicked, or would more of mankind attain happiness? Both parties allow that "wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction," and that "many are they that go in thereat;" and, on the other hand, that, in fact, "strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." On any scheme of thought whatever, the *fact* is the same. The question then returns to this, what scheme gives most advantage in dealing with men, as to their immortal concerns, and reflects most honour on the character of God?—or, which amounts to the same thing, what do the sacred oracles teach us on the subject? No one is at liberty to interpret one part at the expense of another: and the appeal is now made to every competent reader, whether Bishop Tomline's scheme does not set up one train of thought contained in the Scripture at the expense of another equally important; and whether the doctrine of *election*, as previously explained, be not consistent with Scripture, consistent with itself, and consistent with the Articles of the Established Church.

§ 27. His Lordship supposes, that the predestination taught in the 17th Article, is God's gracious *purpose* to make a *conditional offer* of salvation to men. "'Those whom God hath *chosen* in Christ,' that is, those to whom God *decreed to make known the gospel of Christ* . . . . 'they be called according to God's purpose *by His Spirit working in due season:* they *through grace obey* the calling: they be justified *freely:* they be made sons of God by adoption: they be *made like the image* of His only-begotten Son Jesus Christ: they *walk religiously* in good works, and, at length, *by God's mercy*, they attain to everlasting felicity;' that is, they *on their part* conform to the conditions of the gospel covenant by *obeying* the calling, and *walking religiously* in good works, under the influence and assistance of the Holy Spirit; and, *as a reward*, they are justified in this world, are made sons of God by adoption, are made like the image of Christ, and at length attain everlasting felicity. Predestination to life, therefore, is not an absolute decree of eternal happiness to certain individuals, but a gracious purpose of God, *to make a conditional offer* of salvation to men, through the merits of Christ."* Surely never was there an Article so inflexibly opposite to the opinion of its expositor! "Those whom

* Refutation, p. 266.

God hath chosen in Christ;" that is, according to his Lordship, "those to whom God decreed to make known the gospel of Christ." If this be the true exposition, the compilers must mean, that those to whom God "decreed to make known the gospel of Christ," or to make a conditional offer of salvation, "*obey* the calling," are "justified freely," are "made sons of God by adoption," are "made like the image of Jesus Christ;" that "they walk religiously in good works, and, at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity!" Are there not millions to whom the gospel is made known, and to whom is made a conditional offer of salvation, who are utter strangers to these effects? How then could the compilers say that these effects are found in those who are "endued with so excellent a benefit of God" as "predestination to life," without pointedly contradicting an obvious matter of acknowledged facts?

§ 28. The question is not whether "God decreed to make known the gospel of Christ," or "graciously purposed to make a conditional offer of salvation to men through the merits of Christ," or whether any "*on their part* conform to the conditions of the gospel covenant by obeying the calling, and walking religiously in good works;" for these things are confessed on both sides. The question is, what is the *real cause* of these effects? or what God does on His part? Men "obey the calling;" but from what cause? Is it an inexplicable self-determining power in the will, or is it grace in the heart,—the power of man, or the Spirit of God "working in due season?" They are "justified;" but do they obtain this great privilege "as a reward," or "freely?" They are "made sons of God by adoption;" but where does this privilege originate? in the will and purpose of man, or in the wise choice of God? The question is not, whether the privilege belongs to the willing and obedient; but, who made them willing and obedient. Was it free-will in the adopted, or the grace of God? That the elect are "made like the image of Christ" is not disputed; but does man effect it by the potent energy of *self*, self-will, self-determination? or does God effect it by His grace and Spirit, whereby they are "transformed into the same image from glory to glory?" The elect "walk religiously in good works." No Calvinist denies this; but we "affirm constantly, that they who believe in God should be careful to maintain good works," and that the disciples of Christ ought "to observe all things whatsoever He hath com-

manded them." We "charge those who are rich in this world, to be rich in good works;" and that all Christians should be found "diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord," according to their situations. Now the question is, when Christians have "walked religiously in good works," to what are we taught to ascribe this effect? How should we give unto man the things that are his, and unto God the things that are God's? If man was the willing agent, was it his own *will* made him willing? or was it "God that worked in him both to will and to do, of His own good pleasure?"

§ 29. True Christians "at length attain to everlasting felicity;" and I have no objection to add that they are "rewarded"—not of merit, however, but "by God's mercy." But how passed the inhabitants of heaven successfully through this wonderful process, the whole series of events, from the first moment of their lives to their enjoyment of "everlasting felicity?" Not to mention their first existence as rational beings, their preservation in life, and that in the wise providence of God they were placed in favourable situations as to religious privileges, we shall suppose that God has "decreed to make known to them the gospel of Christ," and "to make a conditional offer of salvation to them." Now, God having done all this on His part, let us see what more is to be done in order "to attain eternal felicity." Jehovah proclaims by His servants, "Incline your hearts to the Lord God of Israel." "Incline your ears to the words of my mouth." But man by nature is "inclined to evil;" and as he cannot incline contrary ways at the same time, there must be some *cause* of a change of inclination from evil to good. This is the first difficulty. The thing is not impossible, else no one could be saved. "The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such," observes the Article on free-will, "that he cannot [which is the same as will not] turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God." But what is impossible with men is possible with God; and when He has been pleased to effect this change of inclination, the true converts are constrained to acknowledge, "Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth;" "He hath made us willing in the day of his power." One of the best passages in the book I am examining is the following:—"A man *cannot*, by his own natural faculties and unassisted exertions, so counteract and correct the imperfection

and corruption derived from the fall of Adam as to be *able of himself* to acquire that true and lively faith which would secure his salvation, or to call upon God with that sincerity, fervour, and devotion, which can alone give efficacy to our prayers. The human mind is so weakened and vitiated by the sin of our first parents, that we *cannot* by our own natural strength *prepare* it, or *put it into a proper state,* for the reception of a saving faith, or for the performance of the spiritual worship required in the gospel. This mental purification *cannot* be effected *without Divine assistance.*" *

§ 30. "Without Divine assistance." The term "assistance," which the Bishop not unfrequently uses in reference to God or the Holy Spirit, is extremely equivocal, as applicable to very different, and almost opposite ideas. The effectual "assistance" which a vigorous parent gives to a helpless child differs much from the occasional and feeble "assistance" which an aged parent affords to a son who is qualified to take the lead in every important undertaking. A fisherman, after having hoisted the sail of his boat, is "assisted" by the wind; and he again *assists* the wind by the skilful plying of his oars. In short, the phrase "Divine assistance" may be used in a lax way by persons of contrary sentiments, as to the *nature* and *degree* of that assistance. It is true there is a co-operation between the Spirit of God and the spirit of man; and this is fully admitted by his Lordship, though he professes that he cannot account for it. "In what manner, or in what proportion, if I may so say, God and man co-operate, I am utterly unable to explain or discover." † I will venture an opinion, however, that the subject itself is neither undiscoverable nor inexplicable; and that the obscurity is not in his Lordship's intellect, but in some false principle that hangs over the subject as an impenetrable veil. As long as any one clings to a principle so useless, so unmeaning, so self-contradictory and demonstrably absurd, as that of free-will being a self-determining power, under whatever terms that principle may be couched, it is by no means hazardous to predict that he *never can* "explain or discover in what manner, or in what proportion, God and man co-operate." Let the incrustation formed by this false principle,—an assumption no less degrading to the human mind that adopts it than affronting to the Spirit of truth and grace,—let this covering be removed, (and may it be removed from every mind!) and the glorious truth will

* Refutation, p. 54. † Ibid., p. 35.

shew itself. God is the source of all active power; from Him "every good gift, and every perfect gift," proceedeth; He is the author of every good principle, in the moral as well as in the natural world. But the will of man, as well as every other will, is determined by some principle; and when to an act morally good, by a good principle. Consequently, God, according to His purpose and grace, is the sole and exclusive cause of every motive that actually determines a free agent to choose and act virtuously. Of every thought, desire, effort, exertion, and operation, that is *truly good*, God is the true parent, "according to the counsel of His own will." If our work be good, it is *because* God worketh in us; for except His operation in us were good, our works would be certainly evil. But as no evil principle of action can possibly proceed from Him, the evil of our work is exclusively our own.

§ 31. In the face of so much evidence to the contrary, the Bishop draws this general inference respecting the 17th Article:— "It appears, then, that the Calvinistic doctrines of election and reprobation are not only *not maintained in this Article*, but that they are *disclaimed and condemned in the strongest terms*."* To some parts of this remarkable sentence, in a divided sense, I do not object. For instance, it does not appear that the doctrine of *reprobation*, as taught by Calvin and some others distinguished by his name, is maintained in this Article. But to say that the Calvinistic doctrine of *election* "is not maintained in this Article," is to overstep the bounds of polemical candour, and offend against the ingenuity that is solicited to make the assertion plausible. But through what medium did the Bishop view the Article when he concluded in his mind, and communicated by his pen, that in it election is "*disclaimed* and *condemned* in the strongest terms?" Where is even reprobation "condemned," much less in "the strongest terms?" If we deal in assertions without proofs, we may boldly affirm that red is blue, or that white is black.

§ 32. In what manner, however, does his Lordship attempt to prove that the predestination of the 17th Article is not Calvinistic? I hesitate, and inquire, Is it possible for a learned prelate to choose for his middle term his own assumed sense of the Article? The sentence of predestination he has been considering, it seems, is that "by which God purposed and decreed to save all who shall believe and obey the gospel,"—a "merciful and consolatory doc-

* Refutation, p. 269.

trine:" But the Calvinistic predestination is attended with "much mischief and danger:" Therefore the Calvinistic doctrine of election is not intended in the Article. This is, truly, not a common mode of arguing with convincing reasoners; and, indeed, is much about as admissible as the following:—The Calvinistic doctrine that secures the happiness of *some* "is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons:" But the Tomlinistic predestination, which consists in "making known the gospel of Christ," and in "making a conditional offer of salvation to men," without any purposed certainty of salvation to *any* individuals, must be most gloomy and dreadful; because on this plan it is possible, if not probable, or even certain, that no human being will ever be saved: Therefore, the 17th Article, which administers comfort, is *for* the Calvinists, and *against* his Lordship!

§ 33. There are two points totally overlooked, which yet ought to be ascertained in order to an accurate view of the Article. First, whether the compilers had in view *two kinds* of predestination—one full of comfort, and the other tending to desperation; next, whether the very *same kind* of predestination may not be to the godly pleasant and comfortable, but to the "carnal and curious" the reverse. I see no reason to infer that the compilers referred to any other doctrine than that which they thought to be necessarily included in "predestination to life." Yet I think it highly probable that they were not free from the prevailing, though unfounded sentiment, that predestination to life *implied* a predestination to death, although they very prudently did not express it. Whatever were their views of *reprobation*, however, they say nothing about it. The Article expressly treats of predestination to *life*, which clearly must be the same as election. Now, if they had respect to two kinds of predestination, one to *life*, and the other to *death*, and if they thought these "inseparable," one is expressed, and the other implied. Godly persons dread neither part; and "curious and carnal persons, lacking the Spirit of Christ," can find no comfort in either. Those "who love God, and are the called according to His purpose," know that "all things work together for their good;" but the ungodly, who neither love God nor have the Spirit of Christ, are disposed to quarrel with the conduct of Providence, with the Divine purposes, and indeed with the Divine perfections: and if so, it is no wonder if they quarrel with themselves, and rush either into desperation and

suicide, "or into wretchlessness of most unclean living." It must be remembered, however, that a far greater proportion of those who run into such wickedness and folly are the *opposers* of Calvinism. And it further deserves to be recollected, that no one is supposed by the Article to abuse the doctrine but "curious and carnal persons," who also abuse the bounties of Providence, only by slower steps, to their everlasting ruin.

§ 34. I will now add, that the "predestination to life" maintained in this volume is precisely the same as what is *expressed* in the 17th Article. But if the framers of it believed, as the Bishop of Lincoln professes to do, that a decree of election is "inseparable" from a decree of non-election, I differ from them as well as his Lordship, for reasons before adduced. If there be anything terrific in the sound of predestination, it must be from false associations; whereby persons darkly ascribe to God's purpose the *evil* no less than the good. Let this mist of error roll away, and the doctrine appears as cheering as the sun, from which proceed neither cold nor darkness, but light, and warmth, and vivifying influence. What advantage can the Bishop's view offer which this does not comprehend? None. This includes no evil any more than his, but it includes more good. Does he hold a decree "to make known the gospel of Christ," and "a gracious purpose of God to make a conditional offer of salvation to men through the merits of Christ?" So do we. Does he discard a purpose of excluding any? So do we. What, then, is the difference? His Lordship's predestination denies any Divine influence that shall make the salvation of any individual *certain*,—a doctrine assuredly fraught with the most dismal gloom, and inexpressibly degrading to the mercy and grace of God. Ours, on the contrary, while it takes away nothing, but allows every natural faculty and religious advantage indiscriminately which the other can possibly require, *insures* the spiritual vivification, the renovation, the holiness, the voluntary and cordial obedience of *some*. And who are these? The very same persons as those whom the Bishop acknowledges will be saved. There is no dispute about how many, or how few. They are precisely those to whom the Judge will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." On both schemes, the Calvinistic and the anti-Calvinistic, they who "attain to everlasting felicity" are identically the same. On both schemes men must have the

same qualifications for heaven, and all shall be judged according to their works. "They that have done good shall come forth unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." We desire none to be brought to heaven, in virtue of predestination or election, but those who are actually suitable, in their state, temper, and conduct, to see God, and to enjoy Him for ever; in short, none but those who shall be introduced by the final Judge. These we call the elect; they reckon themselves, when they have done all, unprofitable servants, and cry out, "Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord, but unto Thy name give praise." Had it not been for Thy discriminating mercy and special grace, we should never have inherited these realms of "everlasting felicity."

§ 35. His Lordship supposes that there was *no difference* between Judas and the other apostles, except good works:—"If the Calvinists say that Judas was never in reality one of the elect, we may ask what proof they can bring of *any difference* between him and the other eleven apostles, except *works?*"* What we say is, that as Judas is not in heaven, he was not *elected* to be there; and all who are there, or ever shall be there, attained to that end, and to all the requisite steps leading to it, in virtue of a Divine purpose, or "the election of grace." We allow that Judas was, in another sense, one of the elect; he was *chosen* to be an apostle, he was endowed with apostolic gifts, he was favoured with extraordinary privileges, and probably did many wonderful *works* in the name of Christ, which were also in a sense "good," as conducing to the good of men and the advancement of Christ's kingdom. "What *proof* of difference, except *works*?" If by "works" be meant the root and branches of moral actions, the *principle* as well as the act, all the difference as to his state at any given time was indeed constituted by "works;" for he had within him the germ of avarice, treachery, and ingratitude. If it be said that his former good works were an evidence that he once had a good principle, I ask what good work did Judas ever do which was a decided proof of a good principle of action? Are we to presume that he had it, except we can prove to the contrary? What! are we to conclude that men have supreme love to God, and a saving spirit of faith and repentance, until they break forth into dishonesty and treachery? Are there no *hypocrites* in the Church of Christ? And

* Refutation, p. 209.

is there *no* "difference" between a hypocrite and a sincere disciple, until the veil be drawn aside?

§ 36. There was one striking "difference" between Peter and Judas, as to the Divine purpose, independently of "works." Peter, having "the root of the matter" in him, notwithstanding his lamentable fall, was still an object of special care and preservation. "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have *prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.*"* Peter had a spark, or a vital principle of faith, which the force of temptation was not suffered to extinguish. He, of whom it was said that He should "not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, until He brought forth judgment to victory," took a special interest in Peter's recovery. "I have prayed for thee." And what was the subject-matter of that prayer? "That thy faith fail not." Now what proof is there that Judas ever had a principle of lively saving "faith?" Did he ever perform any "work" that *proved* he was no hypocrite at the time, or that he had the true fear and love of God, with a sincere and decided attachment to Jesus. In short, good works are the best criterion whereby to judge of characters and principles in our intercourse with each other, and this our Lord has clearly sanctioned by His conduct towards Judas; but it would be erroneous to infer that there was no difference between Judas and the other apostles, except in "*works,*" in the obvious and natural acceptation of this term, inasmuch as there is abundant *proof* that Jesus, who knew his heart, regarded him as a hypocrite and a traitor before any of the other disciples entertained a suspicion of his faithless principle. "For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who believed not, and who should betray him."† Had Judas possessed a principle of faith, like Peter, why not pray for the former as well as the latter? If he never had a faith like Peter's,—which was a heavenly gift, as every spiritual principle is,—then more had been done for Peter than Judas, independent of "works." To imagine that such a favour was conferred on Peter rather than Judas, on the ground of their different good works foreseen, is subversive of itself, because no works are supposed to exist in future, but what sprung from the favour then conferred. The reward supposed is a good principle—the spirit of faith, without which it is impossible to please God; how, then

* Luke xxii. 31, 32. † John vi. 64.

can this faith, without which no works are good, be the reward of good works? But if the difference be not of *works*, it must be of sovereign *grace*, whereby the other apostles were more highly favoured than Judas; though what he had in common with the others, and wickedly abused, rendered him altogether inexcusable.

§ 37. We are again told, that the *general terms* of God's love are *irreconcilable* with His electing some and *leaving* others to perish:—"'God so loved the world, that he give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' In this and many other passages of the New Testament, relating to the motive and design of Christ's advent, God's love for the world is declared in *general terms;* and surely these texts are *irreconcilable* with the idea of God selecting out of mankind a certain number whom He ordained to save, and of His *leaving* the rest of mankind to perish everlastingly." * The difficulty here, is to find out some degree of plausibility in the objection. For what is there *like* inconsistency, between a general love to mankind, and a more special love to some of them, under the direction of unerring wisdom? Love and hatred, indeed, are irreconcilable, except when used in a comparative sense, as they are often used in Scripture; as when hatred denotes a *less degree* of love. Thus a true disciple should "*hate*" (*i.e.*, love in a less degree) his father and mother, &c., for the sake of Christ; and thus God loved Jacob, but did not love Esau to the same degree, or in the same respect. It was a great instance of Divine love that God should give His Son as an all-sufficient ransom for the sins of mankind; but great as it was, if nothing more were done, every soul of man might perish everlastingly. We have need, in order to have a good hope through grace, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified, to be redeemed by *power* as well as by *price*. The sacrifice of Christ is the ransom, but the Spirit of Christ is the redeeming power that makes "free from the law of sin and death."

§ 38. "*Leaving* the rest of mankind to perish everlastingly." Is it conceivable that God *could not* save one soul more than will be eventually saved? Then that soul which will not be found among the saved eventually, will be "*left*" by Him to perish everlastingly, on the Bishop's own system. If it be said, that in the latter case it was their own fault, and no arbitrary decree, which

* Refutation, p. 195.

denied them the means of salvation; I return precisely the same answer respecting the former case. There is no arbitrary decree, as before shewn at large, to the injury or the annoyance of any portion of God's universe of intelligent beings, (or, indeed, particle of created existence of any kind, if that expression be more acceptable,) without previous demerit. If any one of the human race be disposed to go to heaven, on the declaration and assurance of God's *general love* to the world of mankind, I am fully satisfied that there neither is, nor can be, any decree of God to prevent him. Jesus Christ has "opened the kingdom of heaven to all *believers;*" nor is there any decree to prevent any one from believing in Christ as the way to the kingdom. But God, foreseeing that none will believe, repent, obey, or fall in with His general love and proclamation of mercy, if left to themselves, will *insure* a "seed to serve Him," both on earth and in heaven.

§ 39. Finally, his Lordship insists, that election is not *confined* to those who will *actually* be saved:—"The word [elect] is applied generally to collective bodies of Christians, to all who in one or more cities or countries professed Christianity, without any discrimination; and it is not *confined* to individuals who must necessarily be saved, or who were predestinated by God to certain salvation, or even to those who will actually be saved."* Now, admitting all this, what is the fair inference, but that the word "elect," in common with many others, admits of different significations. There is an election to gospel privileges, to church-fellowship and a participation of sacraments, &c.; but this is no argument against an election to partake of special grace and future glory. A choice made of collective bodies does not exclude another more special choice of individuals among them, who were "redeemed from among men," and from that collective body, to partake of a Divine principle, a lively saving faith, to "walk in white," and "by patient continuance in well-doing," to inherit eternal life and glory.—These are his Lordship's principal objections, and virtually the whole of his objections, as far as I can perceive. The reader will judge whether they have been fairly answered.

* Refutation, p. 206.

CHAPTER IV.

SOME THINGS ARE ASCRIBED BY HIS LORDSHIP TO CALVINISTS, WHICH ARE NOT APPLICABLE TO THEM.

SECTION I.

Some things are imputed to Calvinists which belong to NO EXISTING SECT *of Christians.*

§ 1, 2. That the Calvinists *seem* to trust in the grace of Simon Magus; and, § 3. To maintain that matter is *incapable* of salvation. § 4. That there are two sorts of men formed by *angels*. § 5. That some men are good, and others bad, by *nature*. § 6. That men have earthly, spiritual, and middle natures. § 7. That some are authorised to sin, because of their *perfection*, examined.

§ 1. THE Calvinistic reader will probably be surprised to learn from the Bishop of Lincoln that he is charged with *believing in the grace of Simon Magus!* His Lordship quotes a great number of "opinions of earliest heretics *greatly resembling* the peculiar tenets of Calvinism;" and from the writings of Irenæus this is one notable *proof* of it:—"He says that one of the doctrines of Simon Magus was, that those who trust in him [*i.e.*, Simon Magus] and his Helena, should have no further care, and that they are free to do what they like; for that men are saved according to his grace, [*i.e.*, Simon Magus's grace,] but not according to just works."* "The assertion of Simon Magus, who is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, and called by ecclesiastical historians the first Christian heretic, that 'men are saved according to his [*i.e.*, Simon's] grace, and not according to just works,' contains in it *the essence of Calvinism;* and it clearly appears that Irenæus considered this as a heretical opinion."† Now I ask the reader, is there any existing sect, is there any individual on the face of the

* Refutation, p. 515. † Ibid., p. 571.

globe, who holds, or is ever likely to hold, this heretical opinion? Does any one professing Christianity in the present day "trust in Simon Magus and his Helena," and that men are saved according to "*Simon's grace*," and not according to just works? Is there any reader of the "Refutation" so credulous as to believe that this heretical, monstrous opinion "contains in it the essence of Calvinism!" Calvinists, indeed, believe and profess that "we are saved by grace,"—that is, the grace of God,—"through faith;" and that all true Christians are "new-created unto good works," in which it is divinely "ordained that we should walk;" and that Jesus is become "the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey *Him*."

§ 2. Perhaps his Lordship thought that Calvinists have no access to the works of Irenæus, or that such atrocious heretics do not understand Latin! Is it sufficient to constitute the similarity, that both Simon and Calvin adopted the word "grace" to express their tenets respectively? On this supposition, the Bishop himself cannot easily escape. What, however, does Irenæus say?—"Prophetas autem a mundi fabricatoribus Angelis inspiratos dixisse prophetias: quapropter nec ulterius curarent eos, hi qui *in eum et in Selenen* [vel, Helenam] *ejus spem habeant*, et ut liberos agere quæ velint: secundum enim *ipsius gratiam* salvari homines, sed non secundum operas justas."* That is, "That the prophets uttered their predictions as inspired by angels, who are the creators of the world: wherefore, they who trust in *him* and in *his Helena* need no further care; and, being free, they may act as they please: moreover, that men are saved according to *his grace*, but not according to just works." Here is not one word about the *grace of God*, but all about the *grace of Simon Magus* and of *his Helena*—a Tyrian strumpet that he carried about with him! And as Simon blasphemously declared himself to be "God the Father," so he conferred on this woman the honourable title of "the mother of all!" So much for the heresy of Simon Magus "greatly resembling the peculiar tenets of Calvinism!" *Greatly resembling!*

§ 3. Again, the Calvinists, it seems, "greatly resemble" the Valentinians, who asserted "that *matter is incapable* of salvation." "'For as it is impossible that the material should partake of salvation, (for they say it is *not capable* of it,) so, again, it is impossible that the spiritual—meaning themselves—should be

* Irenæi Opera, p. 116, Ed. 1639.

subject to corruption, whatever conduct they pursue. Wherefore, those of them who are the most perfect do without fear all things which are forbidden.'"* Calvinistic reader, did ever any mirror give you a more striking resemblance of yourself? As you are so like a Valentinian, of course you cannot believe that Jesus Christ is "the Saviour of the body," or that there is any resurrection of the dead. You must have expunged from your Bible and your creed that Jesus Christ will "change this vile body, and make it like unto His glorious body." You must have renounced what the Valentinians (the very image of yourself) considered impossible—viz., that the material part of you should partake of salvation, a salvation of which it is "not capable." While you so nearly resemble these heretics, you must hold it an impossibility that you should be subject to corruption of any kind, "whatever conduct you pursue." And as you believe yourself to be one of the most perfect of human beings, you cannot scruple to "do without fear all things which are forbidden." But if you disown the resemblance, can you point out any other existing sect of Christians who bear it?

§ 4. The Calvinists are represented as holding tenets resembling the heresy of Saturninus—viz., that there are *two sorts of men formed by angels.* "'He [Saturninus] first asserted, that there are *two sorts* of men formed by the *angels*, the one good, the other bad; and, because demons assist the worst men, that the Saviour came to destroy bad men and demons, but to save good men.'"† This is the whole of the quotation, and therefore *some* part of it at least must be intended as a resemblance of Calvinism. But where shall we find it, except in the first part, without involving the Bishop himself, who will allow, no doubt, that the Saviour came to save the good and to destroy the wicked among men as well as evil spirits; and that demons assist the worst of men by diabolical temptations. It remains, then, that if there be anything peculiar to Calvinism resembling the heresy of Saturninus, it must be the formation of *two sorts of men by the angels!* An attempt to defend Calvinism from this charge would be an insult to the readers' knowledge and common sense. But we may just put the question, Is there any existing sect of Christians that holds an opinion bearing any resemblance to this heresy?

§ 5. Again, the Calvinists are charged with resembling the

* Refutation, pp. 513, 514; from Irenæus. † Ibid., p. 515.

heresy of the *Valentinians*, by maintaining, that some men are good and others bad, *by nature*. The following are two complete quotations brought for this purpose:—"'Subdividing souls themselves, they say that some are by nature good, and some by nature bad.'" * "'They [the Valentinians] say, that some men are good by nature, and some bad.'" † But where or when have the Calvinists, or even any one of them, maintained anything resembling this notion? Need I repeat our sentiments, that "God made man upright," but that since the fall of Adam, all his descendants are depraved, and their corrupted nature is "inclined to evil?" We never say, that any men since the first apostasy are by nature "*good*." If they are made "good," it is by a gracious influence from God. Why excite the odium of one part of Christians against another, by feigning a resemblance to the Valentinian heresy, while no sect in the present day bears to it any degree of similarity?

§ 6. The Calvinists are charged with maintaining, that men have *earthly, spiritual*, and *middle* natures:—"'When you hear the expression "to whom it is given," do not adopt any heretical notion; do not fancy that there are different natures, *earthly, spiritual*, and *middle* natures. For certain persons are *so ill disposed* as to imagine that some are of a nature which must absolutely perish, others of a nature which must be saved; and that a third sort are so circumstanced, according as their will may lead them to vice or to virtue.'" ‡ If *any* persons are "so ill-disposed," they must of course be the Calvinists of the present day; but as among these we seek in vain for this crude, stale, ancient, and long-exploded philosophic dogma, among what existing sect of Christians shall we find it? Truly, nowhere. It has disappeared for many ages, and it is to be expected that it never will reappear, whatever dignified name may attempt to conjure up its ghost.

§ 7. Calvinists must needs be heretics, it seems, because they hold, after the example of the odious Basilidians, that they are *authorised to sin* because of their *perfection*. For thus writes Clemens of Alexandria:—"'I have quoted these words in reproof of the followers of Basilides, who lead incorrect lives, as persons who are *authorised to sin because of their perfection;* or who will certainly be *saved by nature*, even though they sin now, be-

* Refutation, p. 514. † Ibid., p. 515; from Irenæus.
‡ Refutation, p. 522; from Gregory of Nazianzen.

cause of an election founded in nature.'" * Is it possible for every Calvinistic reader, not instantly to recognise his own likeness in this picture of the Basilidians drawn by Clemens, framed and set up by the Bishop of Lincoln, to be viewed by all the world as a "great resemblance?" Undoubtedly no reprobation can be too severe for those, if any such there are, who, with the followers of Basilides, "authorise themselves to sin because of their perfection,"—that imagine, under whatever pretence, that they "will certainly be *saved by nature.*" But for the Calvinists—his Lordship may rest assured that they abominate the Basilidian fraternity, and these monstrous dogmas, equally with himself. I will venture to affirm, indeed, that they would find it difficult to point out any other sect of the present age bearing any resemblance to them; or even to form any charitable guess how the right reverend prelate came to imagine a resemblance? Seriously, by such modes the pen of controversy becomes an instrument of discord among brethren; and he who employs it, to use a homely but not unapt expression, "lets himself down."

* Refutation, p. 517.

Section II.

Some things imputed to Calvinists in a SENSE *which they* DISOWN.

§ 1, 2. That all *Christian graces* are communicated by the sole operation of the Spirit, without any concurrence on the part of man. § 3. That faith does not require any *voluntary* steps, or exercise, but is *forced.* § 4. That the control of sinful passions is *physically* impossible. § 5. That irresistible grace necessarily and solely produces a godly life. § 6. That Calvinists lay claim to *private* revelations. § 7. Pretend to instantaneous and forcible conversions. § 8. To the sensible operation of the Spirit. § 9–11. To *experiences,* as suggestions or perceptions by immediate inspiration. § 12. That they maintain *sinless* obedience and *incorrigible* pollution. § 13. That man has no concern in working out salvation. § 14. A moral incapacity tending to melancholy or profligacy. § 15, 16. Preach faith so as to encourage licentiousness. § 17. Are inconsistent in holding salvation through faith alone.

§ 1. His Lordship imputes to Calvinists this notion, that all Christian graces are communicated by the sole operation of the Spirit. This he states as one of their positions, as constituting an extreme opposite to the Socinians: "that faith and all the Christian graces are communicated by the sole and irresistible operation of the Spirit of God, without any endeavour or concurrence on the part of man."* Our sentiments are not here fairly stated, because the terms "faith" and "Christian graces" are used by us in one sense, and by the Bishop in another. We, according to the Scripture, consider "faith" in one sense as the gift of God, and in another, as the duty of man. The spirit of faith, or the spiritual principle, is the gift of God, preventing or preceding, and exciting the will to believe, according to just evidence, the whole testimony of God. But the act of believing that testimony is ours, and implies an "endeavour and concurrence on the part of man." Each of these ideas we, according to the circumstances of the case, express by the word faith: and indeed the Scripture authorises us to use the term as denoting other ideas beside these principal ones; particularly the object believed. The blessed Saviour is called the author and finisher of faith,—*i.e.,* the gospel believed by us;

* Refutation, p. 2.

and Paul after his conversion is said to preach the *faith* which he once destroyed.

§ 2. Similar distinctions may be made on the term "grace." Thus we maintain that "Christian graces," as to the renovating principle, are from the sole operation of the Spirit of God, in contradistinction from the assumed notion of a self-determining power in the human will to renovate the heart; but the *exercised* "Christian graces," which require a perceived *object* of their existence, imply an "endeavour or concurrence on the part of man." Thus, it is not the Holy Spirit, but we ourselves, by virtue of His assistance, love God and our neighbour, fear the Lord and the glory of His majesty, trust in Him at all times, rejoice with trembling in contemplation of promised blessings and our own impotence amid surrounding dangers, and hope for distant good things promised. And thus St Paul terms "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," which are exercised "Christian graces," "the fruit of the Spirit."* Their origin and principle is from the Spirit, but considered as exercised by us, they are properly ours. The term "grace" is also used frequently in Scripture for exhibited favour; as "the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men;" "the gospel of the grace of God," &c.

§ 3. In the same manner we fairly meet a great variety of similar insinuations and charges with which the "Refutation" abounds. Among these we might notice, for instance, that believing does not include an act of the will:—"These commands to ask, to seek, and to knock, *prove* that our Saviour *required some voluntary steps* to be still taken by those who were already persuaded of the Divine origin of the doctrines He taught."† An incautious reader of the "Refutation" might be led to suppose, that the Calvinists deny what is here proved; whereas, in fact, we maintain it not less strenuously than his Lordship. Again:—"We are authorised to attribute their *faith* to the *voluntary exercise* of their reason."‡ What Calvinist ever maintained that "faith," in the sense of believing a testimony, does not include "the voluntary exercise of reason?" Moreover:—"Now, it must be allowed, that it is one thing to give a man *power* to act, another to *force* him to act." The reader of this remark might be induced to think that

* Gal. v. 22, 23; see also Eph. v. 9.

† Refutation, p. 15. ‡ Ibid., p. 18.

the Calvinists held the *latter* idea. We hold, however, no such thing; but that the Spirit gives the power, while the will acts freely.

§ 4. "It is only *contended*," says the Bishop, "that the temporary or occasional control of their sinful passions was never *physically impossible*."* By his Lordship professing to "contend" this point, the idea is excited in his reader's mind that Calvinists hold a "physical" as contradistinguished from a *moral* impossibility; whereas the contrary is the notorious fact. All the "impossibility," we hold, of controlling sinful passions is a prevailing criminal indisposition to do so. "Even St Paul allowed the *possibility* of his having received the grace of God 'in vain;' and surely the same *possibility* must be admitted with respect to all other Christians."† Surely it was very "possible" both for Paul and "all other Christians" to "receive the grace of God in vain" IF left to themselves, or to their unassisted free-will. Election does not operate as a charm, to the exclusion of the intermediate steps of "keeping the body under and bringing it into subjection," &c. "The Spirit *helps*, but does not *compel* us."‡ Very true, for in whatever respect we are compelled, in the same respect we are not free; and freedom is essential to accountability. But why should the reader's mind be led to suppose that Calvinists hold, as a part of their creed, a "compulsion" which is inconsistent with moral agency? To the same effect is the following insinuation:—"By the suggestion therefore, and with the help of, God's grace, we endeavour to follow the example of Christ, which *shews* that the grace of God *does not act with compulsory force*, but only directs and assists our endeavours."§ What reader, who was not previously better informed, could avoid supposing that the Calvinists held the absurd notion of "compulsory force" rather than Divine *assistance?* They differ indeed from his Lordship respecting the precedency of that assistance, but utterly disclaim the notion of "compulsory force."

§ 5. "Were grace *irresistible*," we are told, "did it *necessarily* and *solely* produce a *godly life*, there would be no room for faithfulness on our part."‖ Here the words marked in italics appear to be applied to us in a sense which we disown. When we use the word "irresistible" in connexion with "grace," we do not suppose

* Refutation, p. 9. † Ibid., p. 32. ‡ Ibid., p. 40.
§ Ibid., p. 69. ‖ Ibid., p. 70.

that no kind of resistance may be made to "grace" in any sense. St Stephen says to the envious and persecuting Jews, "Ye do alway *resist* the Holy Ghost." They and their forefathers were in the habit of resisting the Holy Ghost, as to His holy words, His holy prophets, His miraculous gifts and operations, the holy tendency of the evidence He afforded, &c. There is a kind of resistance implied in "quenching the Spirit," as to the flame of holy affections of which He is the original cause; and when any temper of mind is indulged, when anything is done, or any duty omitted which has this tendency, in that respect, and to that degree, the Holy Spirit may be said to be quenched. Throwing water upon a flame may be called quenching it, for that is the real tendency of that act, whatever may be the final result. So Christians are warned against *destroying* a weak brother by uncharitable conduct, for that is the tendency of such conduct,—the very reverse of edification. What we profess, therefore, is, that the operations of the Holy Spirit in the saints will prove efficacious and victorious over "the world, the flesh, and the devil," when God *purposes* that event, whatever momentary resistance may be ungratefully made. In this sense, Calvinists have sometimes said that grace is "irresistible;" though the other terms just mentioned appear more strictly accurate. Whereas the Bishop explains its import by the words "*necessarily* and *solely* producing a *godly life*," which we disown, except in a qualified sense, a sense perfectly compatible with free-agency and moral obligation. Necessity in the acceptation of certainty is one thing, but necessity in the acceptation of force or compulsion is another. And grace "solely" producing a good principle of action, denotes a very different idea from the same grace producing "solely" a "godly life."

§ 6. The Bishop remarks, that "the real orthodox divine maintains that every true Christian is inspired, enlightened, sanctified, and comforted by the Spirit of God." I am happy to learn from his Lordship's own pen that the modern Calvinists are "orthodox," thus far. But is there not "a fly in their pot of ointment?" For "the real orthodox divine rejects all claim to *private revelation*, all pretensions to *instantaneous* and *forcible* conversion, and to the *sensible* operation of the Spirit; in short, he disclaims what, in the language of modern Calvinists, are called *experiences;* that is, *suggestions* or *perceptions*, known and felt to be communicated by

the *immediate* inspiration of God."* Here, indeed, many "flies" are brought to buzz around the Calvinistic "pot," and it is but too apparent that the Bishop of Lincoln has wasted much of his time and ingenuity in labouring to force them in, but with little success. For where has his Lordship learnt that Calvinists lay claim to "private revelations?" We "reject" the claim in the sense here insinuated. We profess that Divine revelation of truth for the use of the Church and all its members is complete in the canon of Scripture, and that no Christian ought to expect a "private" revelation of any new truths which are not there revealed. But if by "revelation" be meant a spiritual discovery of the real meaning of religious truth, as the effect of being "enlightened" by the Spirit of God, we acknowledge it. But, then, does not his Lordship claim the very same for "the real orthodox divine?"

§ 7. Much has been said of late about "*instantaneous* and *forcible* conversion." Now granting that any Calvinists have used such phrases in regard to some very rare instances of conversion, as perhaps in the case of Colonel Gardiner, and a few others, is it candid to interpret them capriciously, in a sense never intended by the writers or speakers; nay, in a sense which they explicitly disavow? One is led to suppose from the Bishop's statement, that Calvinists urge the *necessity*, or at least the *importance*, of conversion being "instantaneous." But I appeal to their writings, to their sermons, and to the constant plan of instruction pursued by them in their families, in evidence that they avowedly disclaim any such opinion. That an "instantaneous" change of heart, and a consequent speedy change of mental operations and of conduct, *may* take place, and in some striking instances actually *do* take place, we frankly acknowledge, as not incompatible with the real state of man, nor with the gracious power of Him "who commanded the light to shine out of darkness." The gracious pleasure of the Almighty is not to be limited by the preconceived opinions of puny mortals. Far be it from us to prescribe to the all-wise God, *when* He must influence the minds of His creatures, or how instantaneously or gradually. We regard it as of incomparably greater importance to turn men's attention to their own hearts and lives, "to examine themselves whether they are in the faith," and to

* Refutation, p. 73.

walk worthy of their "professed subjection to the gospel of Christ." And as to "*forcible* conversion," in the obnoxious sense intended in the objection, we reject the sentiment; while we plead that conversion, whether slow or sudden, is an effect of Divine gracious power influencing the heart.

§ 8. It is further objected to modern Calvinists, that they pretend to "the *sensible* operation of the Spirit." As this is imputed to us a deviation from orthodoxy, we have a right to ask his Lordship what he means by the word "sensible" in this connexion? Surely he is too candid and just to impute to us the gross absurdity of holding as a religious tenet that the operations of the Holy Spirit are subjected, or made visible, audible, or tangible, to our corporeal senses. But if he mean only that we hold the *effects* of Divine operations to be "sensible," in the acceptation of "apprehensible;" or that we may be "conscious" of effects which can be rationally ascribed to no other cause; we must stand convicted. Who, indeed, that is conscious of loving God supremely, or of loving the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, can rationally ascribe such effects to any other source than Divine operation? "If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God." "By this we *know* that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren." "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; what, *know* ye not your own selves?" If Christians may not be "sensible" or conscious of gracious effects in their own minds, what rational interpretation can be given of these passages of holy writ, and many others of the same import and tendency? In this acceptation of the phrase, "the sensible operation of the Spirit,"—which is the only one we acknowledge,—does not "the real orthodox divine" concur with us?

§ 9. "The real orthodox divine," we are again informed, "disclaims what in the language of modern Calvinists are called *experiences*." This expression is certainly to be found in the Calvinistic nomenclature. But what is meant by it? Is it some enthusiastic "*suggestions* or *perceptions* known and felt to be communicated by the *immediate inspiration* of God?" Nothing less. This is only his Lordship's arbitrary interpretation of the term. When we speak of an "*experienced*" Christian, we designate one who has learned spiritual wisdom by trials, and especially by mental exercises. When we speak of "experiences," related or written, we mean those exercises of mind which are of a religious

nature; in other words, how our minds have been affected with the consideration of certain truths revealed in the Scripture, or by the contemplation of God, of His providence, and of our own state before Him. That some persons, both Arminians and Calvinists, have not been entirely free from enthusiasm, in giving an account of their mental exercises, is not to be concealed. But who can say, with truth, that these occasional mistakes are *countenanced* by the party here accused? We expect, very generally, of persons who wish to enter into communion with us some account of their religious sentiments, what effect these have had on their views and tempers, how they obtained relief when made sensible of their sinful nature and practice, by what means they were induced to repent and believe in Christ, &c. But do we ever expect to receive from them an account of "suggestions and perceptions known and felt to be communicated by immediate inspiration" in an *enthusiastic* sense? No. If at any time, which very seldom happens, we discover a propensity that way, we rather check it as wrong, than encourage it as excellent. But if a person mention either the time, the place, or the occasion of his undergoing any remarkable change, either of his views, his resolutions, his affections or conduct, we call it his "experience:" if it be scriptural and rational, we approve it; if otherwise, we disapprove it. We are not quite so destitute of discretion as to imagine that "all is gold that glisters:" and we can assure his Lordship, that many unlettered rustics in our societies have delivered such "*experiences*" as the heart of a good man might rejoice to hear; manifesting in these simple records such acquaintance with their Bibles, such improvement in religious knowledge, such traits of Christian sincerity, of repentance and lively faith, such genuine humility, meekness, and charity, as powerfully to fix the conviction that there is a *reality in religion*, and that the kingdom of God consisteth not in *word* but in *power*. It is incumbent on me, moreover, to add, that we make it a rule, rather it is a rule made for us by Scripture and reason, to institute suitable inquiries respecting their discharge of personal and relative *duties*, their moral character, and consistent deportment. And if admitted into our communion, we watch over them to see that they "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." If they do not "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called," we warn, admonish, or reprove them; if they backslide, we endeavour to "restore them in the

spirit of meekness;" and if any are not reclaimed by scriptural and prudential means, we exclude them from our communion.

§ 10. I appeal to the impartial reader whether our proceedings, as now related, be not founded on Scripture, on right reason, and on just principles of a voluntary society, such as every Christian congregation ought to be? As true religion does not consist merely in a set form of words, or even just notions of truth, but also in a great measure in an "experience," or a consciousness of the influence of truth on the heart, temper, and conduct, "a congregation of Christian people," associating voluntarily for the worship of Almighty God, to promote His glory and the good of immortal souls, according to the directions of His word, have a right to expect an appropriate evidence of a similar design in every member of their communion. If any one appear to be essentially defective, on a charitable construction, we reject his proposal, as proceeding from one who is more likely to injure than to promote the spiritual design of a Christian church. But we do not sit as judges on his state towards God, as if we thought there was no salvation to be obtained without the pale of our communion. We do believe, however, that there is a *kind* of "inspiration" to be enjoyed by Christians; and does not "the real orthodox divine" believe the same, when he prays to God that He would "cleanse the thoughts and desires of his heart, by the *inspiration* of His Holy Spirit?" If there be no such thing to be experienced, it must be a very unmeaning and presumptuous service. If he claims the use of it in a good sense, why may not the same sense be intended by a Calvinist? We hope and pray for a Divine influence on our hearts, to enable us to love God, and to keep His commandments; in other words, that He will "have mercy on us, and *incline our hearts* to keep His laws." Surely, this inclining of the heart implies some kind of inspiration or influence from the Spirit of God, except men can satisfy themselves with words without a meaning.

§ 11. As to "*suggestions* and *perceptions* known and felt to be communicated by the immediate inspiration of God," which are expressions imposed upon us rather than approved by ourselves, we consider them as capable of a bad and a good sense. If by "suggestions" be meant mysterious whispers, or certain unaccountable intimations presented to the mind, unconnected with any truth revealed in the Scriptures, we consider them as mere delusions;

but we believe that the influences of the Spirit may animate and exhilarate the soul in its contemplations and other religious exercises, so that the effects may be "known and felt." "The wind bloweth where it listeth," and though the manner of the operation be not known, the effects may be both known and sensibly experienced. The same may be observed of "perceptions." We may not, and ought not, to expect to know the agent or the agency, yet the fruits and consequences may be of a nature entirely unequivocal.

§ 12. The Bishop brings many other charges against us, which are founded entirely on a misinterpretation of our meaning. A few more specimens may be here mentioned:—"It cannot, therefore, be pretended that this Article [on Original Sin] gives any countenance to the Calvinistic notions of *sinless obedience* and *unspotted purity* in the elect, and of *incorrigible pollution* and *inevitable wickedness* in the reprobate."* It would, perhaps, be uncharitable to suppose that his Lordship invented this crude notion for the purpose of exposing Calvinism to contempt, yet I am utterly at a loss to conjecture where he found it. We acknowledge no "sinless obedience" except the Redeemer's in this world, but all who are true believers are "complete in Him," that is, completely "accepted in the beloved." Instead of professing "unspotted purity," we lament our momentary imperfection. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; but if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Whatever some of the ancient Calvinists have advanced about "incorrigible pollution" and "inevitable wickedness in the reprobate," I hope none of the moderns approve either of the language or the sentiment.

§ 13. His Lordship records the following as an error of the Calvinists—viz., "that man has no concern whatever in working out his salvation;"† but as he produces no evidence, a direct and explicit denial of the charge is sufficient. I may, however, observe, that some preachers, and perhaps writers, have used the phrase "a finished salvation" in reference to Christ's obedience unto death, and in allusion to His own words "It is finished." And why should the Calvinist alone be denied the common privilege of a candid interpretation? In such connexion, the word "salvation" must intend the *basis* of salvation, as the word *redemption* is used for the price or the fundamental consideration of redemption.

* Refutation, p. 51. † Ibid., p. 48.

§ 14. An unguarded reader of the "Refutation" might be induced to apply the following language to Calvinists indiscriminately:—"The equally erroneous and baneful doctrine of *moral incapacity*, in the extent unhappily adopted by Calvin, tends to produce hopeless melancholy, or hardened profligacy."* By "moral incapacity" we are naturally led to understand a disinclination, a dislike, or a want of good-will to what is right or excellent in a moral sense. Now it would be difficult to find in the writings of Calvin a greater moral incapacity than is expressed in the formularies of the Church of England, especially in the Article on Original Sin. However, neither Calvin nor any other person ever expressed it in stronger terms than St Paul, when he said, that "the carnal mind is *enmity against God;* for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed *can* be. So, then, they that are in the flesh *cannot* please God."† "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither *can* he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."‡ Is it possible for language to express a greater degree of "moral incapacity?" Indeed I allow and lament it, that Calvin, and some others after him, have illegitimately *inferred* an "incapacity" besides what is "moral;" I mean, an incapacity implied in a supposed decree of reprobation. Nothing, I am persuaded, has more impeded the progress of theological and moral truth, or set the sentiments of real Christians more at variance, than an attempt to establish this unfounded dogma. And to speak my mind impartially, I freely concede to his Lordship that its tendency is "to produce hopeless melancholy or hardened profligacy." But then his Lordship ought to have known, that very few modern Calvinists ever advance it, and with the great body of them it is a sentiment utterly exploded. After all, too, it is a totally different thing from a "moral incapacity."

§ 15. I am at a loss how to make any conciliatory concessions on such charges as the following:—"If he be told that he has only to cherish *faith* in his mind, and he will be eternally happy, he will be apt to persuade himself that he has this *faith*, while he is guilty of every vice within his means to which he feels any temptation. He will remember that the preacher only told him to have *faith*, and that he did not enjoin him to abstain from lying, drunkenness, theft, and fornication; and whoever has lived

* Refutation, p. 78. † Rom. viii. 7, 8. ‡ 1 Cor. ii. 14.

in the neighbourhood of certain preachers, *will testify* that it [this mode of reasoning] has taken place."* I would fain discover a scintilla of candour in this statement, but am unable. If there *be* any such preachers in our country, why class them with Calvinists? why not give them their proper denomination, Solifidians or Antinomians? The Calvinists, indeed, after the Sacred Scriptures, consider genuine operative faith—the faith that worketh by love, purifies the heart, and overcomes the world, and by which, it is recorded, "the just shall live"—of unspeakable moment. For by a *believing* consideration of revealed truths, both promises and precepts, doctrines and duties, every Christian grace is improved, and every obligation to obedience appears more important: a *believing* view of God and His glorious perfections,—of Jesus Christ in His person, offices, and mediatorial work,—of the Holy Spirit and His promised aids,—in short, of the Divine law and the blessed gospel,—must be rationally supposed to have a decisive influence on a man's mind and conduct. But we utterly disown and condemn the practice, if there be any such, of telling an audience that they have "*only* to cherish *faith*" in order to be eternally happy.

§ 16. There are, indeed, individuals in most audiences who are "servants of corruption," and such will be ever disposed to "pervert the Scriptures," to "hold the truth in unrighteousness," to "turn the grace of God [*i.e.*, gracious truths] into lasciviousness, [*i.e.*, lascivious practices.]" Such characters there were in the apostolic churches, and in every age. But I will venture to affirm, without fear of being fairly contradicted, that the presumptuous doctrine of human ability, or the power of free-will, in connexion with the mode of preaching recommended and adopted in opposition to the importance of faith, is far less efficacious in forming the conscientious and consistent Christian. Viewing the evil consequences of each extreme, if one has "slain its thousands," the other has "slain its ten thousands." Facts are stubborn things, and they are the best evidence that the case affords. To these we appeal; and let any true and impartial witness who lives "in the neighbourhood of certain preachers," decide under what ministry "lying, drunkenness, theft, and fornication" prevail most. If one presumes, through criminal ignorance or perverseness, that "faith only" will save him, the other presumes, through ignorance no

* Refutation, p. 165.

less criminal, that some fancied good works will counterbalance all his vices. We are told that "even a doubt of the efficacy of *virtue* will lead to a disregard to its laws."* But the counterpart is at least equally true, that even a doubt of the efficacy of *faith* will lead to a disregard of *its* laws. "What God hath joined, let not man put asunder."

§ 17. "Calvinistic ministers," we are informed, "with all their zeal to support the doctrine of *salvation through faith alone*, and all their anxiety to depreciate the importance of moral virtue, cannot avoid the *inconsistency* of allowing that 'good works will in any sense be rewarded.'"† Salvation, we all know, is a relative term, implying some evil or danger from which a person is saved. Now, is there any other way—his Lordship being judge—of being saved from condemnation but "through faith alone?" If this be not a doctrine taught by the formularies of the Church of England, it is difficult to know what they teach. Again, "depreciation" denotes a comparative idea. The same thing may be highly valued on one account, and yet ought to be depreciated on another. Gold may be highly valued as a medium of commerce, and in many other respects; but gold formed into an idol, and set in competition with the true God, ought to be "depreciated." That glorious luminary the sun is highly and justly valued as the source of light and the attracting centre of our system; but when a Persian exalts it into competition with its Maker, and claims for it religious adoration, it ought to be "depreciated." Thus also good works and moral virtue, though truly valuable in their proper place, yet when they are produced in order to *save* us from condemnation or procure our justification before God, ought to be "depreciated." But there are other things from which we have need to be saved besides condemnation for a breach of law and covenant. For instance, we have need to be saved from a charge of being destitute of moral virtue and good works, which are due to God from all His rational creatures; and I know of no salvation or deliverance from this charge, but by being actually virtuous, and by actual good works. Now, what "inconsistency" is there between depreciating moral virtue and good works in one case, and highly esteeming them in another? Is the sun of no value because he is not a proper object of religious confidence?

* Refutation, p. 172. † Ibid., p. 182.

SECTION III.

Some things imputed to Calvinists which are PECULIAR TO OTHER SECTS.

§ 1. To profess a state of *sinless* obedience and unspotted purity in this life is peculiar, in one sense, to Antinomians. § 2. In another, to Arminian Methodists. § 3–5. The Calvinistic view of *Christian perfection* explained. § 6. To vindicate dreadful crimes, abominations, and reproaches, peculiar to the refuse of civil society. § 7. The representations of Irenæus, Epiphanius, &c., probably overcharged. § 8. This probability increased by modern facts. § 9. To profess private revelations peculiar to enthusiasts. § 10. That a continual progress in obedience is not necessary on our part to secure salvation, peculiar to practical Antinomians. That Calvinists endanger the Established Church, and, § 11. That their doctrine is liable to abuse, examined. § 12, 13. That the *greatest danger* of the Established Church is *peculiar to itself.*

§ 1. UNDER this head of our Examination I shall consult brevity; yet, as it is my design in this work not merely to shew that the Bishop's numerous charges against the modern Calvinists are unfounded, but also to explain our views of Christian doctrines, I shall dwell a little longer on some articles than otherwise would be necessary. For instance, his Lordship calls the notions of "sinless obedience and unspotted purity" *Calvinistic.* Here, in order to an answer sufficiently fair, I might content myself with denying the imputation, except he had brought proofs of it. He might suppose that the notion is of public notoriety; and I might assert with confidence that the contrary is a fact of public notoriety. If any persons, preachers or authors, express themselves in similar terms, they belong to other denominations. *Antinomians* have said some crude things about the elect being sinless, as considered in Christ, who is so,—that Christ was made a sinner for us,—and that we are pure or without spot in Him, &c. For my own part, I can give them credit, that their real design is far less exceptionable than their expressions, interpreted with rigour, would import. If it be urged that these may be termed Calvinists, because they hold many points in common with Calvin, his Lordship himself may be so termed. For what denomination of Christians is there that does not hold many points in common with Calvin?

§ 2. The *Arminians* also in connexion with Mr John Wesley,

at least many of them, have said much about "Christian perfection" and "sinless perfection." And some of them have contended that the latter is attainable in this life; nay, that some characters have actually attained this exalted distinction. Independently of the notion being justifiable or unjustifiable, I appeal to any one who has an accurate and extensive acquaintance with the Calvinists, is there *one* to be found among them who makes this profession? I know not any. Is it fair, is it accurate, to impute to one denomination that which is *peculiar* to another? But, as before hinted, I wish to *explain*, as well as to *defend* the sentiments of modern Calvinists; and I shall therefore attempt to put my readers in possession of their sentiments on the subject.

§ 3. Absolute perfection belongs to God only. Compared with Him, every creature is imperfect. "The heavens are not clean in his sight, and he chargeth his angels with *folly*," that is, comparatively speaking. And yet the apostle Paul speaks of Christians as *perfect;* St John supposes "perfect love" may be in the disciples of Christ, "casting out fear;" Noah and Job are said to be "perfect;" and it is the declaration of Bildad that "God will not cast away a perfect man." Were we, therefore, to renounce every idea of perfection, as applied to Christians, who live under the most perfect dispensation of religion, we should be chargeable with a most notorious contradiction of God's word. What we maintain is this: first, that *every* true Christian has the perfect righteousness of Christ imputed to him. In this perfection he is so interested, as to be perfect or complete in the point of acceptance with God, since without such perfection and personal interest in it, we think it not conceivable how an imperfect creature could be accepted or justified. Secondly, that every true Christian has a perfection of sincerity and aim: for the very idea of sincerity, or a "single eye," excludes all imperfection of principle; imperfect sincerity being a contradiction in terms—no less so than impure purity, or a feigned unfeignedness. Thirdly, that some Christians have a perfection of exercised graces, compared with others of lower attainments.

§ 4. Their knowledge of revealed truths, for example, is more clear and comprehensive; they have a more accurate acquaintance with the perfections and character of God, and with their own real state compared with Him and His law; their love to God and to the Saviour is more steady, constant, and operative; they have

that perfect love that casteth out fear; their faith is strong, giving glory to God, and rises to full assurance of the reality and importance of the things believed; their hope is more firm and steadfast, under the various trials of life; they delight themselves in the Lord more constantly; their confidence in God is less wavering; their affections are more set on things that are spiritual and heavenly; they are more zealously affected in a good cause; they more uninterruptedly cleave unto the Lord with full purpose, and follow Him more fully. The kingdom of God is more powerfully set up in their souls, consisting of righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Compared with others, they may be said to rejoice evermore, and to pray without ceasing. They are of a meek and quiet spirit, and are clothed with humility; they put on the whole armour of God, and stand in the evil day of temptation; they grow up more and more into the likeness of Christ, and inwardly but humbly triumph in expectation of the glory that is promised them. And, to crown all, they sink into their proper insignificancy and nothingness, that the Lord alone may be exalted, reckoning themselves unprofitable servants.

§ 5. Though every true Christian, therefore, is equally perfect as interested in the perfection of Christ, and equally perfect as to the reality and sincerity of grace, considered as a principle in the soul; yet there is a great difference as to exercised graces. There are, in this respect, babes, young men, and fathers in Christ. Their actual attainments admit of a great difference, which may be compared to the blade, the ear, and the full corn in the ear. But those who are most perfect, in this comparative sense, do not pretend to "sinless obedience and unspotted purity." Their best prayers and praises are defective; often "when they would do good, the evil is present with them, and how to perform that which is good they find not." They sincerely intend the glory of God that they may enjoy Him for ever; but the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these two are contrary. And the more they know of themselves, the more ready they are to confess, "I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy commandment is exceeding broad." "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" "I have not already attained, nor am I already perfect," compared with a state of *sinless* perfection. There is still room for greater exertions, in keeping the body under, and bringing it into subjection, in taking up the cross, and following Christ.

While in this tabernacle of the body, they groan, being burdened, wishing to be clothed with their house which is from heaven. Yet they rejoice in hope of the glory of God, yea, in tribulations also, because the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto them. This is the "Christian perfection" maintained by Calvinists.

§ 6. Through the convenient medium of ancient heretics we are represented as "guilty of dreadful crimes" and "doing many abominable and ungodly things," and "inveighing against those who, from the fear of God, are cautious not to sin even in thought or word, as idiots and fools."* I will not say, that Calvinists have never transgressed the bounds of perfect charity, that "hopeth all things, and endureth all things," when opposing error, or condemning sin. They are men of like passions with others, and, therefore, when slandered and traduced they must needs feel it: must feel it sometimes with resentment as well as pity, and occasionally an indignant word may escape them. It is not true, however, that they sanction or countenance any conduct or expressions that appear inconsistent with charity any more than with truth. It is one of their principles to "overcome evil with good," and "by well-doing to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men," as directed by apostolic authority. But really one might be led to suppose that the quotation from Irenæus regarding the Valentinians, represented by his Lordship as "resembling the tenents of Calvinism," was *peculiar* to none but the refuse of society,—to the inmates of Newgate or the colonists of Australasia. It would be a curious and not an unprofitable investigation to ascertain what proportion of Calvinists and anti-Calvinists are executed, or sent to the hulks, as "guilty of a great variety of dreadful crimes."

§ 7. Low as we think human nature is sunk by the original apostasy, we may suspect that its degraded state is too strongly marked by Irenæus, Epiphanius, and others who have written against heretics. There is too much reason to suspect that these writers were not so intent upon a fair estimate of truth and error in their opponents, as they were solicitous to suppress and degrade them altogether; and that the easiest way of doing this was by drawing a strong caricature of their opinions, and exhibiting them in the most forbidding light. I am far from thinking that these fathers had no just ground of complaint; but they did not act

* Refutation, p. 514.

fairly, they kept no bounds, their pictures were too highly and extravagantly charged, and scarcely compatible with the real state of man's nature. We too well know to what excesses zeal without knowledge, or without charity, is in danger of being betrayed.

§ 8. Now, if in this advanced period of the Christian Church, the Bishop of Lincoln, surrounded with adequate means of information, himself a man of acknowledged learning, talents, and respectability, is capable of drawing such a caricature of modern Calvinists, as we find contained in his "Refutation," the just inference is, that little dependence is to be placed on the bare assertions of interested parties in whatever period they may chance to wrangle. "And doing many other abominable and ungodly things, they [*i.e.*, the Valentinians resembling the Calvinists] inveigh against us, as . . . . idiots and fools." Surely this portrait, on a cool review, cannot be sanctioned by his Lordship as an exact portraiture! Why, these are notions and this is conduct "peculiar" rather to infidel revilers, to the disciples of Paine or the licentious admirers of Voltaire! Oh, when will the ministers of Christ learn to "speak the truth in love," and shew themselves worthy of their holy and Divine Leader!

§ 9. There are many other things in the "Refutation" ascribed to Calvinists which are peculiar to other sects: such as a "claim to private revelation," which is peculiar to *enthusiasts*, whose distempered fantasies, like Jonah's gourd, spring up in one night and perish in another, as their falsehood becomes manifest, to the confusion of their prophetic authors. If any reputed Calvinists fall into such deliriums, we disown them, as having deserted sound principles. Again, to represent "instantaneous conversion" as one of the "favourite tenets of modern Calvinists," is to confound their sentiments with those of another denomination of Christians. If this be a *peculiarity* of any class of Christians, it is to be found among those who agree with his Lordship in the chief points of theological controversy; and especially on the cardinal point of the sovereign power of free-will to produce instantaneous conversion in connexion with the promised influences of the Spirit; and who in this respect consequently stand opposed to modern Calvinism, which attributes more to the sovereign power of grace. I must remark, however, that many of these Christian brethren, controversy apart, unite with us occasionally in acts of religious worship, and in the exercise of kind affections. For men of this

stamp, "who, from the fear of God, are cautious not to sin even in thought or word," we have an unfeigned respect: and God forbid that we should on any occasion regard them "as idiots and fools." While we disapprove of their creed in some respects, we can embrace them as fellow-Christians in the arms of affection. We consider ourselves bound to respect and love those who "fear God, eschew evil, and work righteousness," among all denominations. "Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding."

§ 10. As to the notion imputed to us, that "a continual progress in obedience" is "not necessary on our part to secure salvation," if it be peculiar to any sect, it is to be found among practical *Antinomians*, with whom we have no fellowship, nor do they desire ours. But the most weighty charge in the estimation of many who read the Bishop's "Refutation" yet remains—viz., "that the *Established Church* is in no small *danger*, from the active hostility of those who profess *Calvinistic doctrines*." * Now for my own part I am at a loss to conceive how these doctrines wear an unfavourable aspect on the "Established Church," or in what manner those who "profess" them are so peculiarly implicated in the alleged hostility. As Calvinists, of whatever description, we are in the habit of expressing our decided *approbation* of the *doctrinal* Articles of the Church of England, which we also consider as closely interwoven with its Liturgy. As Calvinistic Dissenters, our chief objection lies against the plan of *discipline;* though many *other* Dissenters (and, I may add, a great number of persons who profess adherence to the Established Church) are hostile to its doctrines. We strongly object indeed to the *general principle* of requiring subscription to articles of faith drawn up by any set of uninspired men, however excellent those articles may be; persuaded that such requisitions have operated to the injury of real Christianity in every age, and that the arbitrary imposition of synodical decrees, canonical rites, and creeds, whether orthodox or heterodox, have kindled flames in the Christian Church, from the second century to the present, which all the wisdom, meekness, and patience of the best of men have not been able to extinguish.

§ 11. Controversial equity requires that I should notice in this connexion a conciliatory concession made by the Bishop in favour of "many Calvinists." It is the following:—"I am most ready to

* Refutation, p. 284.

allow that many Calvinists have been pious and excellent men; and I am fully satisfied that there are in these days zealous Christians of that persuasion who would be among the first to deplore any evil which might befall our constitution in Church or state." * This is the voice of candour; but it is overpowered by a very grievous exception:—"I contend that Calvinism is a system peculiarly liable to *abuse*. The *perversion* of its tenets has in former times been made, by wicked and designing men, the instrument of great mischief." It is but fair to ask, what good thing is there (*virtue* indeed excepted, as an ancient philosopher well observes) which is not "liable to abuse?" Are not the Divine laws themselves, and "the blessed gospel of the grace of God," thus "liable?" Nay, are not those tenets which are the very best the most exposed to "perversion by wicked and designing men?" It is needless in this place to enter into the history of Calvinism, in order to establish its exculpation in comparison with the sentiments of its opposers; but I will venture to say, that the Canons of Councils, provincial and ecumenical, and Acts of Uniformity in religion, have been a thousand times more mischievous to "the interests of real Christianity" than Calvinism. I cannot indeed return the compliment, that these have been "abused" and "perverted," because it would be an implied acknowledgment that in themselves they were good things; but I am constrained, by the fullest evidence, to regard them as an actual *abuse* of power.

§ 12. Before I dismiss the idea of the Established Church being in "danger" from Calvinism, may I be allowed to submit my individual opinion with regard to a "danger," a substantial, not an imaginary danger, which seems to menace it from another quarter, and appears to me far more formidable. I allude to the modish practice of some of its own clergy to inveigh against Calvinism as a frightful enemy. If I am not mistaken, the natural tendency of this is to excite the attention of the people to inquire *what it is* which is "everywhere spoken against." They examine the Liturgy, the Articles, and perhaps the Homilies; and the consequence is, that they see, or suppose they see, that they are all Calvinistic. The most inquiring among them become dissatisfied with their ministers, when they strongly suspect that the desk and the pulpit are at variance. They then discover, at least they think they discover, that the modern doctrine which they hear preached

* Refutation, p. 284.

in the Church, is very different from that which was taught by the Reformers, and by those excellent men who drew up her formularies. By degrees, they wish to learn what the "Calvinists" have to allege in their own behalf,—they are astonished to perceive the prevailing similarity between their scheme of doctrine and that which they find in the Liturgy and the Thirty-nine Articles,—and infer that their own teachers have apostatised from the faith of their pious ancestors.

§ 13. In order to cure this growing process, it would be at least prudent, instead of waging a war of extermination against the Calvinists, to preach the Established doctrines more plainly and faithfully, appealing to the judgment and the consciences of the people, as well as to the Scriptures. This method, when accompanied with holy tempers, upright conduct, and watchful prudence, would do more towards preserving the Church from danger, than ten thousand weekly moral essays intermixed with bitter invectives against Calvinistic and Methodistic "fanaticism." In the one case, they might reasonably hope to attach the people to their own Church upon principle; in the other, they are labouring to the utmost of their ability to drive them away. The one method addresses itself to the understanding, to the cool judgment, to the best feelings of an audience; the other to the prejudices, the bigotry, and the angry passions of unprincipled or ignorant men. I do not presume to dictate in this matter, but have simply taken occasion to state my opinion frankly and impartially.

CHAPTER V.

QUOTATIONS FROM THE CHRISTIAN FATHERS, PRODUCED BY THE BISHOP, EXAMINED.

SECTION I.

Quotations from the Fathers which have NO BEARING *on the points in question.*

§ 1. The subject stated. How we ought to *estimate* the sentiments of the fathers. § 2. Quotations which relate to what *belongs* to men and to God, from Cyril. § 3. Concerning what is not *excusable*, from Hilary. § 4. The *consequence* of not believing, from Ambrose. § 5. Concerning Divine *assistance*, from Jerome and Augustine. § 6. The act of sin *voluntary*, from Augustine. § 7. Christians the subjects of *two births*, from Augustine. § 8. The danger of falling into opposite *extremes*, from Augustine. § 9–12. *Errors* condemned, from Augustine and Chrysostom. § 13. Certainty of Divine *promises* to those who are willing, from Chrysostom. § 14. Concerning Divine *permission*, from Chrysostom. § 15. Concluding remarks.

§ 1. WERE I to say that more than one-half of the pile of quotations from the fathers, consisting of about two hundred and forty pages, produced by the Bishop of Lincoln against Calvinism, has no bearing on the point in question, I should be far from transgressing the boundary of truth. Of the other moiety, a considerable part militates against the Bishop's avowed principles,—a part consists of quotations which are doubtful, only in expressions against the Calvinists, but not in meaning,—and the remainder appears to be unscriptural, both in language and in sentiment. Before we proceed to particulars, it may be proper to premise that these uninspired fathers lived in the infancy of the Christian Church; that they have no just claim to superiority over the moderns, who in many respects are their superiors, as they are their seniors in point of advantages; that the controversies agi-

tated in their days were very different from those under consideration; that we possess the same Scriptures that they possessed; that the rules of just criticism are now better understood than in their days; that a more accurate logic may be naturally expected in the present age than that to which they were accustomed; and that, notwithstanding their zeal, piety, and eloquence, in many instances they are very indifferent guides in controversial theology. The ultimate appeal must be to the genuine sense of the inspired volume.

§ 2. Some of the quotations relate to what belongs to men and to God. Thus Cyril of Jerusalem says, "'It *belongs* to me to *speak*, to you to give *attention*, to God to *make perfect*.'"* Again:—"'It *belongs* to God to give grace, but to you to receive and preserve it. Do not, therefore, despise the grace because it is given freely, but, having received it, preserve it with reverence.'"† Whole pages to this effect are quoted; but what have they to do with the points in debate? Whole volumes of similar quotations might be extracted from the fathers; but what tendency could they have to settle controversies about Calvinism?

§ 3. Other quotations refer to what is not excusable. Thus Hilary remarks:—"'The *excuse* of a certain natural necessity in crimes is *not admitted;* for [on that supposition] the serpent might have been innocent, who himself stops his ears that they may be deaf.'"‡ Again:—"'There is not any *necessity* of sin in the *nature* of men, but the practice of sin arises from the desire of the will and the pleasure of vice.'"§ Here the author evidently refers to a fatal necessity, as maintained by the Valentinians, Basilidians, Marcionites, and other heretics of those times; but what relevancy is there in such quotations against modern Calvinists? We cordially concur with Hilary in condemning such dogmas.

§ 4. Some quotations are produced to shew the consequence of not believing. Thus Ambrose:—"'If any one does not believe in Christ, he *defrauds himself* of the general benefit, just as if one should exclude the rays of the sun by shutting his windows.'"‖ Again:—"'He saw that those who are diseased cannot be saved without a remedy, and therefore He afforded a medicine to the sick; therefore He brought the assistance of health to all, so that

* Refutation, p. 347. † Ibid., p. 349. ‡ Ibid., p. 359.
§ Ibid., p. 360. ‖ Ibid., p. 380.

whosoever shall perish may ascribe the cause of his death to himself, who was unwilling to be cured when he had a remedy by which he might have escaped.' " * Of what possible use is it to multiply quotations on this head while there is no difference of opinion?

§ 5. Many quotations relate to Divine assistance. Thus Jerome:—" 'We so preserve free-will to man, that we do not deny the *assistance of God* in each thing.' " † And thus Augustine:—" 'If he [Pelagius] will agree that the will itself and the action are *assisted by God*, and so assisted that we cannot will or do anything well without that assistance, no controversy will be left between us, as far as I can judge, concerning the assistance of the grace of God.' " ‡ And so say the Calvinists. As these lines contain the whole of the quotation, what could be his Lordship's design in producing it? On what information could he rest, if he supposed such passages as these are adverse to modern Calvinism?

§ 6. Other quotations are produced to prove that the act of sin is voluntary. To this effect, we have a long quotation from Augustine:—" 'If that defect which is called sin, like a fever, seized a person *contrary to his will*, the punishment which follows the sinner, and which is called damnation, would appear to be unjust. But now, sin is so far a *voluntary evil*, that it is by no means *sin* unless it be *voluntary;* and this, indeed, is so clear, that not any of the learned, and no considerable number of the unlearned, dissent from it. Wherefore it must either be denied that sin is committed, or it must be confessed that sin is committed with the will. Lastly, if we do not act wrongly with the will, no one is to be reproved at all, or admonished; and if you take away these things, the Christian law and the whole discipline of religion must necessarily be destroyed; therefore *sin is committed by the will.*' " § Again:—" 'A distinction is to be made between the law and grace: the law commands, grace assists. Neither would the law command unless there were will, nor would grace assist if the will were sufficient.' " ‖ I have inserted these passages because they give a good illustration of the Calvinistic sentiment upon the point in question. What could be the learned Bishop's design in producing them, it is distressing to conjecture.

* Refutation, p. 378. † Ibid., p. 410. ‡ Ibid., p. 448.
§ Ibid., p. 415. ‖ Ibid., p. 417.

§ 7. We have a prolix quotation from Augustine to prove that real Christians are the subjects of two births:—"'There are *two births:* one is of the earth, the other of heaven; one is of the flesh, the other of the spirit; one is of mortality, the other of eternity; one is of male and female, the other of God and the Church. But each of these two takes place only once; neither the one nor the other can be repeated. Nicodemus rightly understood the birth of the flesh. What did Nicodemus understand? "Can a man enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" Whoever shall say to you that you may be born a *second time spiritually*, answer him what Nicodemus said, "Can a man enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" I am already born of Adam; Adam cannot generate me a second time. I am already born of Christ; Christ cannot generate me a second time. As the natural birth cannot be repeated, *so neither can baptism.*'"* I have added this last clause, to complete the quotation, for the purpose of shewing in what manner the term "baptism" is used. The whole of the passage evidently shews that the name of the sign is made to stand for the thing signified. Here the Calvinistic sentiment is clearly explained. The true Christian is born of heaven, born of the Spirit, born of God; and this birth "*cannot be repeated.*" Baptism, literally considered, not only may, but often is repeated: as first privately, then publicly,—one time by affusion, another time by immersion, &c.; but the spiritual baptism, the thing signified, "*cannot* be repeated."

§ 8. Another passage from Augustine deserves to be inserted here, not only as an instance of those quotations which have no bearing on the point in question, but as an edifying exemplification of Calvinistic sentiments on the danger of falling into opposite extremes:—"'The mind of man wavering and fluctuating between the confession of infirmity and the boldness of presumption, is generally beaten about this way and that, and is so impelled that he is in *danger of falling down a precipice on either side.* For if he should entirely give himself up to his own infirmity, and incline to this opinion, so as to say, Because the *mercy of God* is in the end so ready to all sinners, in whatever sins they may persevere, provided they believe that God delivers, that God pardons, that no one of the wicked who has faith (*fidelium iniquorum*) perishes,—that is, no one of those perishes who say to

* Refutation, p. 421.

themselves, Whatever I may do, with whatever crimes and wickedness I may be defiled, how much soever I may sin, God delivers me by His *mercy*, because I have believed in Him: he, therefore, who says that no person of this kind perishes, from a wrong opinion, inclines to the impunity of sinners; and that just God to whom mercy and judgment are sung [Ps. ci. 1]—not mercy only, but judgment also—finds the person wrongly presuming upon Himself, and abusing the *mercy* to his own destruction, and must necessarily condemn him. Such a thought, then, throws a man down a precipice; through fear of which, if any one should raise himself to a certain boldness of presumption, and shall presume on his *own strength and righteousness*, and shall propose in his own mind to fulfil righteousness, and so to do all things which are commanded in the law, that he offends in nothing, and to have his life in his own power, so that he nowhere fails, nowhere stumbles, is nowhere in darkness, and attributes this to *himself* and to the *power of his will;* even if he should happen to fulfil all things which seem just in the sight of men, so that nothing is found in his life which can be blamed by men, God condemns this very presumption and boast of pride. What, then, happens if a man should justify himself, and presume upon his *own righteousness?* He falls. If, considering and thinking of his own weakness, and *presuming on the mercy of God*, he shall neglect to purge his life of his sins, and shall plunge into every gulf of wickedness, he, too, falls. Again, I say this short thing, which you may all keep fixed upon your minds: Presume not on your *own righteousness to reign;* presume not on the *mercy of God to sin.*'" * Can any cautions be more strictly consistent with Calvinism? Were it not that the language is not of modern construction, one might suppose it an exhortation from a modern Calvinist to his audience.

§ 9. Many quotations are introduced with a view, apparently, to condemn errors; which errors, however, are equally condemned by modern Calvinists. A few of these must suffice. Augustine:—"'Abraham offered his son Isaac to God, to be sacrificed—a great work, but of faith. I praise the *edifice* of the *work*, but I see the *foundation* of *faith*. I praise the *fruit* of good works, but I acknowledge the *root* in faith. But if Abraham did this without a right faith, that work, of whatever kind it might be, would not profit him. Again; if he had faith, so that when God should

* Refutation, p. 425.

command him to offer his son to be sacrificed, he should say with himself, I do not do it, and yet *I believe that God delivers me, even though I despise His commands;* faith without works would be dead, and would remain, as it were, a barren and dry root, without fruit.'" * What Calvinist does not heartily concur in this condemnation?

§ 10. Chrysostom:—"'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.' In this passage Christ seems to me to *reprove the Jews, who placed everything in their dogmas, without any regard to their lives.* Therefore St Paul accuses them, saying, "Behold, thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will;" but there shall be no advantage to you from thence, unless there be a correspondence in your life and works. But he did not stop here, but said much more: "For many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?" For he says, not only he who has faith, but leads a careless life, is excluded from heaven, but although with his faith a person shall have performed many miracles, and have done nothing good, he, also, is equally excluded from those sacred gates.'" † Excellent remarks! Again; the same father, Chrysostom, answers erroneous cavillers (whom the Bishop of Lincoln, it appears, deems like the Calvinists) in the following manner:—"'They bring other objections, asking, And why did God make him such? God did not make him such; far from it; for then He would not have punished him. For if we do not blame our servants for those things of which we are ourselves the cause, much less would the God of the universe. But the objector says, Whence came he such? From himself, and from his own negligence. What! from himself? Ask thyself; for if the bad be not bad from themselves, do not punish your servant, or reprove your wife for her offences, or beat your son, or accuse your friend, or hate your enemy who injures you. For all these deserve pity, not punishment, if they do not offend from themselves.'" ‡ There is much more to the same purpose in the quotation, and all truly Calvinistic.

§ 11. Of the same evangelical and Calvinistic tendency is the following quotation from Augustine, against the error of those who separated faith and works:—"When the apostle says, that he con-

* Refutation, p. 429. † Ibid., p. 481. ‡ Ibid., p. 482.

cludes that man is justified by faith without the works of the law, he does not mean that the works of righteousness may be disregarded, after faith is perceived and professed; but that every one may know that he may be justified by faith, although the works of the law shall not have preceded. For they follow the person justified, and do not precede him who is to be justified. Because, therefore, this opinion had then arisen, the other apostolical epistles of Peter, John, James, and Jude, principally direct their zeal against it, to prove with great earnestness, that faith without works is of no avail; as even Paul himself has not defined it faith of *any sort*, by which men believe in God, but that wholesome and plainly evangelical faith whose works proceed from love: and faith, he says, which worketh by love.'"* In this manner Augustine reproved the false teachers of his day; a manner precisely similar to that which is adopted, when occasion demands it, by the modern Calvinists.

§ 12. Chrysostom refutes the error of those who hold that men are good by force, in opposition to choice:—"'Since He has made us masters of the choice of bad and good actions, and wishes us to be voluntarily good; therefore if we be not willing, He does not *force*, He does not *compel;* for to be good *by force* is not to be good at all.'"† Nothing can be more decidedly Calvinistic Through what medium then, it is natural to ask, could his Lordship look at the doctrines of modern Calvinism, when he imagined that this quotation had any bearing against them? With equal astonishment they will find their learned Refuter adducing from the same father the following passage containing a censure on some professing Christians who had imbibed the heathen absurdities about fate:—"'*God* says, If ye be *willing*, ye shall eat the good of the land; but *Fate* says, *Although we be willing*, unless it shall be permitted us, this *will* is of no use. *God* says, If ye *will not obey* my words, a sword shall devour you; *Fate* says, *Although we be not willing*, if it shall be granted us, we are certainly saved. Dose not Fate say this? What, then, can be clearer than this opposition? What can be more evident than this war, which the *diabolical teachers of wickedness* have thus shamelessly declared against the Divine oracles? But, as I have said, that demons and men like demons (I mean the Greeks) should believe these things, is no wonder; but that you, who were thus enjoying

* Refutation, p. 439. † Ibid., p. 456.

the Divine and saving instruction, should despise these things, and adopt those absurdities, which destroy the soul, this is of all things the most grievous.'"* What reader can his Lordship expect to apply this language in opposition to modern Calvinists, except one here and there profoundly ignorant of their principles? Does even the Bishop really wish his readers to regard them as "the diabolical teachers of wickedness," resembling those who are here opposed by Chrysostom? Where is knowledge, where is candour, where is common equity? I believe we have not a member nor a catechumen in our societies, who would not cordially approve of Chrysostom's reasoning.

§ 13. An unsuspecting reader of the "Refutation" would be induced to regard the following quotation, also from the writings of the same father, as adverse to our principles, from the mere circumstance that it is inserted there for that purpose; while at the same time it is perfectly consonant with our professed opinions. It relates to the certainty of Divine promises to those who are willing:—"'But some one may say, that if acting rightly depends upon the assistance of God, and it is not in my power to act rightly, I ought not to be blamed; for when I shall have done everything in my power, and shall have willed, and chosen, and entered upon the business, but He upon whom the success depended shall not have assisted me, or stretched out His hand, I am freed from all blame. But this is not the real case. For it is impossible, *if we will, and choose, and resolve, that God should desert us.* For if He encourages and exhorts those who are unwilling to be willing, much more does He not desert those who choose of their own accord. "For look," says He, "at the generations of old, and see, did ever any trust in the Lord, and was confounded? or did any abide in his fear, and was forsaken?" And again, Paul says, "Hope maketh not ashamed;" that is, hope in God; for it is impossible for any one to fail who hopes in God with all his mind, and exerts himself to the uttermost. And again, we are told, "He that endureth to the end shall be saved." These are all rules, and laws, and decrees; and this ought to be fixed in your mind, that it is impossible that any one who is diligent, and takes care for his own salvation, and makes all the exertion in his power, should ever be deserted of God.'"† Many pages to the same purpose might be here inserted from Chrysostom,

* Refutation, p. 458. † Ibid., p. 477.

(were I not desirous of avoiding needless prolixity,) as fully consentaneous to our views on this subject; and really when we find the Bishop swelling his pages with them *against* us, it is difficult to assign any probable motive which would not impeach either his integrity or his discrimination.

§ 14. There are some quotations, still from Chrysostom, produced against the Calvinists, relating to the Divine permission, which, notwithstanding, we must take leave to regard as pious and conclusive:—"'This is the peculiar language of Scripture, "God gave them over to a reprobate mind," and "God hath divided unto all nations;" that is, He has *permitted*, allowed. For he does not here introduce Him *acting*, but he shews that these things happen by the wickedness of others. For when we are deserted by God, we are delivered up to the devil; but when given up to the devil, we suffer ten thousand evils. Therefore, that he may alarm the hearer, he says, He hardened, He *gave up*. For that He not only does not give us up, but does not desert us except from the want of our own will, learn from these expressions:—"Do not your sins separate me and you?" And again:—"They that forsake Thee shall perish." Hosea says, "Thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, and I will forget thee." And He himself in the gospel says, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, and ye would not!" And again Isaiah:—"I came, and there was no man; when I called, there was none to answer." These things He says to shew that we are *ourselves the origin of our being deserted*, and *the cause of our own destruction.*'"*

§ 15. Were it not that I consider the preceding quotations as orthodox, and calculated to instruct and edify the pious reader, an apology would be necessary for detaining him so long on subjects which have no bearing on the points in controversy. I have given the quotations in the Bishop's own translation of them, to preclude all suspicion of unfair design. There is no doubt his Lordship might have conveyed their meaning in language far more perspicuous and elegant, had he thought proper to deviate from so literal a rendering; but, where controversy is concerned, he was perfectly right in preferring faithfulness to elegance, if the union of both was really incompatible.

* Refutation, p. 496; Chrysost. Opera, vol. viii, p. 407.

Section II.

Quotations produced by the Bishop which militate against his own avowed principles.

§ 1. Quotations concerning the source of Christian graces, from Ignatius and Clement of Rome. § 2. On the Divine source of our virtue, from Origen and Cyril of Jerusalem. § 3. The same, from Gregory of Nazianzum. § 4. That nobody can begin anything that is good without the Lord, from Ambrose. § 5. That man can do no good work without God, from Jerome. § 6, 7. That God is the efficient cause of works and graces, from Augustine. § 8. On *baptism*, from Justin Martyr. § 9. On *regeneration*, from Irenæus. § 10, 11. On *predestination* to life, from Clement of Alexandria. § 12. On the same, from Jerome. § 13. Remarks on a passage in Jerome about God *willing us to will*. § 14. On *perseverance*, from Ambrose; and, § 15. From Augustine. § 16, 17. On *co-operation*, from Augustine; and, § 18. From Chrysostom. § 19. On human *weakness*, from Chrysostom.

§ 1. I SHALL begin with those quotations which relate to the *source of Christian graces*, including *faith*. The reader will recollect what are the Bishop's avowed sentiments concerning faith, as produced in a former part of this volume.* The following quotation is from Ignatius, a contemporary of the apostles: —"'Of all which nothing is hidden from you, if you have *faith* perfectly towards Jesus Christ, and *charity*, which are the beginning and end of life. Faith is the beginning, charity the end. *These two* formed into one *are of God*.† But all other things which relate to a holy life are *consequences* of these things. The tree is made manifest by its fruit; so those who profess themselves Christians shall be discerned by their actions.'"‡ Thus also Clement of Rome, a contemporary of the apostles:—"'For what was our father Abraham blessed? Was it not because through faith he wrought righteousness and truth. Isaac, knowing with confidence what was to come, cheerfully submitted to be a sacrifice. Jacob, with humility, departed out of his own country, flying from his brother, and went to Laban and served him, and the sceptre of the twelve tribes of Israel was given to him. They were therefore all

* Chap. II., Sect. III.

† τὰ δὲ δύο ἐν ἑνοτητι γεννομνα Θεοῦ ἐστιν.

‡ Refutation, p. 287; Coteler., vol. ii., p. 15.

glorified and magnified, not for their own sake, or for their works, the righteousness which they had wrought, *but through His will.** What then shall we do, brethren? Shall we cease from good works, and lay aside charity? God forbid that this should take place in us, but let us hasten with cheerfulness and alacrity to perform every good work.'" † Here these apostolic fathers expressly ascribe Christian graces, especially faith and charity, to *God* and *His will* as their *source* exclusively.

§ 2. On the Divine source of our virtue Origen observes:—"'The virtue of a rational creature is mixed, arising from his own free-will, and the Divine power conspiring with him who chooses that which is good. But there is need of our own free-will, and of Divine co-operation, *which does not depend upon our will,* not only to *become* good and virtuous, but also after we become so, that we may persevere in virtue; since even a person who is made perfect will fall away, if he be elated with his virtue, and ascribe the whole to himself, not referring the due glory to Him who contributes *by far the greater share,* both in the acquisition of virtue, and in the perseverance in it.'" ‡ That no virtue can be exercised without our free-will, is confessed on both sides; but here a kind of Divine operation is asserted "which does not depend upon our will." Thus also Cyril of Jerusalem:—"'That the soul of every one of you may be found "not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." I do not say *before you receive grace* (for how could that be, you who are called for the remission of sins?) but that *after grace is given,* your conscience, being found without condemnation, may *concur with grace.*'" § Here the *precedence* of the concurrence, as the immediate source of our holiness, is evidently ascribed to *Divine grace.* Nor is there anything in the connexion tending to shew that Cyril meant by the term "grace" objective favours exclusively.

§ 3. Gregory of Nazianzum:—"'When you hear, "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy," I advise you to suppose the same thing. For because there are some so proud of their virtue, as to attribute everything to themselves, and nothing to Him who made them and gave them wisdom, and is the Author of good, this expression teaches them that a right will stands in need of assistance from God; or rather,

* οὐ δι' αὐτὼν . . . . ἀλλὰ διὰ τοῦ θέληματος αὐτου.

† Refutation, p. 289. ‡ Ibid., p. 339. § Ibid., p. 350.

the very desire of what is right is something Divine, and *the gift of the mercy of God.* For we have need both of power over ourselves, and of salvation from God. Therefore, says he, "It is not of him that willeth," that is, it is not of him *only* that willeth, nor of him *only* that runneth, "but of God that sheweth mercy." Since *the will itself is from God,* he *with reason attributes everything to God.* I know, says he, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; nor is the victory to those who fight, nor the harbour to those who sail well; but *it is of God* both to work the victory, and to preserve the vessel into port.'"* In this passage, Gregory expressly ascribes to *God,* as its proper *source,* "the very desire of what is right;" and as "the will itself is from God," so "everything" that is good is attributed to Him "with reason."

§ 4. Ambrose, one of the most judicious and self-consistent of the fathers, observes, "'God says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." Perhaps you may say, we ought then neither to will nor to run; but God is wont to desert those who are negligent; therefore this is not His meaning. But let us consider what He does mean: *Perseverance* is not of the man who willeth, or of him who runneth; for it is *not in the power of man:* but it is *of God,* who pitieth, that you may be able to complete what you have begun. . . . . You see, because the power of God everywhere co-operates with the endeavours of man, that nobody can build a house without the Lord, nobody can keep a city without the Lord, nobody can *begin anything without the Lord.*'"† Here Ambrose not only denies to man the "power" of persevering, but also the power of *beginning* "anything [*good*] without the Lord."

§ 5. Jerome also is very explicit on this point of gracious causality from God:—"'Man, from the beginning of his condition, has God as an assistant; and since it was of His grace that he was created, and it is of His mercy that he subsists and lives, *he can do no good work without Him,* who has so granted free-will, that He did not refuse His grace in any single work.'"‡ Again:—

* Refutation, p. 371.

† Refutation, pp. 380, 381; Ambr. Opera, vol. i., pp. 1098, 1309.

‡ Refutation, p. 383.

"'When, says he, you shall return to the Lord, He shall heal all your contritions and backslidings, by which you had departed from the Lord. For though, through your own will you return to the Lord, yet *unless He shall draw you*, and strengthen your desire by His support, *you will not be able to be saved.*'" * Moreover:—"'For by grace ye are saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.' Therefore, he says, He was about to shew the exceeding riches of His grace in the ages to come, in His kindness, because ye are saved by grace through faith, not through works. And *this very faith is not of yourselves*, but *of Him who called you.* But this is said, lest, perhaps, this thought should secretly arise in you: If we be not saved through our works, certainly we are saved through faith, and in *another* way our salvation is owing to *ourselves.* Therefore he added and said, *that faith itself is not of our will, but of the gift of God.* Not that free-will is *taken away* from man.'" †

§ 6. As to Augustine, who was so much engaged in opposing the Pelagian heresy, it is no wonder that he should refer all our good works, and all our graces to God as their efficient source, though there were other heresies, still subsisting in his day, against which it was necessary to be guarded:—"'If, therefore, there be no *grace* of God, how does He *save* the world? And if there be not *free-will*, how does He *judge* the world? Wherefore, understand my book or epistle according to this faith, that ye neither deny the grace of God, nor so defend free-will as to separate it from the grace of God; *as if you could by any means think or do anything according to God without it, which is altogether impossible.* For on this account, the Lord, when He spake concerning the fruits of righteousness, said to His disciples, Without me ye can do nothing.'" ‡ Again:—"'How are they said to deny free-will who confess that every man who believes in God with his heart believes only with his own free-will; whereas they rather oppose free-will who oppose the *grace of God, by which it is in reality free to choose and do what is good?*'" § Moreover:—"'He foreknew that their will would be bad; He *foreknew* it indeed, and because His prescience is infallible, the bad will is not on that account *His*, but *theirs.* Why then did He create those whom He knew would be such? Because, as He

* Refutation, p. 388.
† Ibid., p. 406.
‡ Ibid., p. 418.
§ Ibid., p. 419.

foreknew what evil they would do, so also He foresaw *what good He would Himself produce* out of their bad actions. For He so formed them, that He left them the means of doing something; by which, whatever they should choose, even blamably, they would find Him acting laudably, concerning Himself. For they have the bad will from themselves; but *from Him a good nature* and a just punishment.'" * As it would be directly opposite to the design of Augustine to suppose him to intend by "a good nature," a nature which was *once* good, though now corrupted, or natural powers which are in themselves good, he must be concluded to mean, that "a good nature" existing in some is from God as its immediate source, while the "bad will" in others is "from themselves."

§ 7. The following observations of Augustine are also truly excellent, in proof of the same point—that God is the immediate source of our graces, from whence flow good works:—"'Let not any one say, *Therefore God chose works* in him whom He loved, although they did not yet exist, *because* He foreknew that they would be; but if He *chose works*, how does the apostle say, that the *election was not made of works?* Wherefore it is to be understood, that good works are done through love, but *that love is in us through the gift of the Holy Ghost*, as the same apostle says, "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." Therefore no one ought to glory in his works as if they were his own, *which he has by the gift of God*, since *love itself works good in him.*'" † As far as the testimony of this Christian father goes, what can be more decisive of the point in question?—and be it remembered that I do not quote all the passages that might be produced, but merely a few specimens.

§ 8. There are some passages in the fathers, contained even in the very quotations which the Bishop has himself selected, that militate against his own avowed notions of *baptism*. Thus, for example, Justin Martyr:—"'What advantage is there in *that baptism which makes clean flesh and body only?* Wash your souls from wrath, and from covetousness, from envy, from hatred, and behold the body is pure.'" ‡ And thus writes Augustine:—"'Water *exhibiting externally* the sacrament of grace, and the Spirit *internally operating* the benefit of grace, loosing the bond of crime,

* Refutation, p. 419. † Ibid., p. 424. ‡ Ibid., p. 298.

and *restoring the goodness of nature,* regenerate the man in one Christ, born of one Adam.'"* Here Justin regards water baptism not as cleansing the soul, but terminating, as to its efficacy, on "flesh and body *only;*" and Augustine contemplates baptism as a sacrament "exhibiting" grace externally; while the internal change is the work of the Spirit. The man is regenerated externally by water baptism, but internally by the Spirit's operation. That these are "*inseparable,*" we have before shewn to be a Popish conceit.

§ 9. The Bishop openly avows, that to regenerate means to baptize, or that regeneration is never used either in the Scriptures or the fathers but in connexion with baptism. Of this let the reader judge from the following passage in Irenæus:—"'The Lord is "the first-born from the dead," and receiving into His bosom the ancient fathers, *He regenerated them into the life of God,* He himself being made the *beginning* of those who live, as Adam was made the beginning of those who die. Wherefore Luke, also beginning the genealogy from our Lord, carried it back to Adam, signifying that *they did not regenerate Him, but He them,* into the gospel of life.'"† The Lord Jesus is here said to "regenerate" the ancient fathers "into the life of God;" but did He *baptize* them? Irenæus evidently uses the word "regenerate," as the Calvinists often do, for that spiritual change, or the beginning of a life from God, which baptism only represents externally, without any necessary connexion between the sign and the thing signified.

§ 10. The Bishop of Lincoln strenuously opposes the Calvinistic sentiment respecting *predestination to life.* Let us now examine whether some of his ecclesiastical auxiliaries are not guilty of treachery. Clement of Alexandria writes thus:—"'We say that there is one ancient and catholic Church, collecting into the unity of one faith, according to its own testaments, or rather according to one testament, delivered at sundry times, by the will of one God, through one Lord, *those who had been already ordained, whom God predestinated, whom He knew,* before the foundation of the world, *would be just.*'"‡ If it be said that Clement means God foreknew that some of themselves would be just, and on that account they "had been already ordained," or "predestinated;" I reply, that this would be sinking the father far below mediocrity

* Refutation, p. 416. † Ibid., p. 301. ‡ Ibid., p. 317.

as to Christian knowledge, and involving him in absurdities which his expressions do not necessarily imply. He must have known, in common with every Christian, that no descendant of Adam can make himself just. He therefore must have intended, by the mode of expression, to guard against the pernicious heresy which discarded all discrimination of character, which founded everything on the determination of fate. Those whom *He* ordains, not *fate*, to be living members of the true Church, are foreknown to be "just," as well as to be saved; nor will any one surely hence infer that they made *themselves* just, as the *basis* of Divine foreknowledge. If *God* makes any one just, it must be from design, such must have "been already ordained and predestinated" to this end.

§ 11. In opposition to the same stupid heresy, the same father thus argues:—"'Either the Lord does not care for all men,—and this proceeds either from His not being *able* to do so, which it is wrong to suppose, as it would be a sign of weakness, or from His not being *willing*, although able, which would not be compatible with His attribute of goodness, for He who for our sake took flesh subject to suffering is not slothful,—or He does care for all men, which is becoming Him who is Lord of all; for He is the Saviour, not of some and not of others, since He *distributed His favour* according to the fitness of every one, both to Greeks and to barbarians, and to *those of them who were predestinated*, being *called in His own time*, the faithful and elect.'" * Here Clement asserts that the care, and government, and merciful dispensations of God had a universal aspect, and not to one privileged nature or class of men to the exclusion of others. Jesus Christ is "Lord of all," both able and willing to "care for all men," who avail themselves of the common salvation. He "distributed His favour," or sent the gospel message, not to classes of natures, but to *nations*, "to Greeks and to barbarians" indiscriminately, as His providence prepared the way, and as any people discovered an inclination to receive it; which the author expresses by the phrase, "according to the fitness of every one." He could not mean a *spiritual* fitness among the "Greeks and barbarians," as a reason why the Lord "distributed His favour" or sent the message of mercy to them, without involving a great absurdity; for what "fitness" of this kind could there be in gross idolaters? It must, therefore, refer to the external admission of the *means* of salvation, as opposed to

* Refutation, p. 316.

a determined rejection of them. But, while the Almighty Potentate thus distributes His favour among the nations, the question returns, Who of them became "faithful and elect," spiritual and worthy characters in the Church? Clement answers, not those who had a fatally good, in opposition to others who had a fatally bad nature, —as maintained by many heretical disturbers of the Christian Church,—but "those of them who were predestinated, being called in His own time." These are "the faithful and elect," among all nations and in all ages. These, besides the common favour distributed to all their countrymen, and besides the common call of the gospel addressed to all alike, have also the privilege of a distinguished character—"the faithful and elect." But did they acquire this character *of themselves?* What had they which they did not receive? Who made them to differ from others around them? If God made them to differ, was it a sudden determination of His mind, when they, by a peradventure, made *themselves* good? If not, they must have been "*predestinated*" to be first favoured with the gospel, then to be effectually called, and afterwards to be faithful and approved characters, and consequently saved.

§ 12. Jerome is very explicit on the same point:—"'In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.' It is to be considered, that predestination and purpose are here placed together, *according to which God worketh all things* after the counsel of His own will. Not that all things which are done in the world are done with the will and counsel of God; for then *wicked things* might be imputed to God; but that *all things which He does*, He does with counsel and will, because they are full of reason, and of the power of Him who acts. We men will to do most things with counsel; but effect by no means follows the will. But *no one can resist Him*, to prevent His doing whatever He wills. But He wills those things which are full of reason and counsel: "He wills all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." But because no one is saved without his own will, (for we have free-will,) *He wills us to will that which is good*, that when we have willed it, He himself also may will to fulfil His own counsel in us.'"* Here Jerome very explicitly declares his mind, that whatever God does, He does it "according to predestination and purpose." But as he proceeds

* Refutation, p. 406.

to reconcile the irresistible will of God with the free-will of man, by stating that "*He wills us to will* that which is good," I am constrained to admire his ingenuity in the mode of expressing a general truth, when apparently unacquainted with the real and scientific principle of reconciliation.

§ 13. Jerome says, "He *wills us to will* that which is *good*." He very properly rejects the idea of God willing any "wicked things," and confines the predestinating purpose and efficiency to *what is good*. When, therefore any one, "wills that which is good," he ascribes it to the *will of God* "according to His predestination and purpose." Thus far the learned father is clear and satisfactory. But a mind intent upon scientific evidence inquires, Upon what principle are we authorised to say that "God wills us to will," when at the same time our will is *free?* How is this conceivable? Here are two wills—one irresistible, the other free; what is it less than a plain contradiction, to suppose that the former operates upon the latter, according to a settled predestinating purpose, in order that it may "will that which is good." Thus we may reason and object, object and reason, in a circle and without end. Without a true principle, all such debates are but "vain jangling," and "opposition of science, falsely so called." But if we regard the will, both of God and the creature, not as the *source*, but as the *medium* of active power, the source of power being the *nature* of the agent, the difficulty vanishes. God's infinitely active nature, under the direction of unfathomable wisdom, exerts His power by the medium of His will. His knowledge is infinite, and therefore His purposes are infinitely wise; His power is omnipotent, and therefore the medium of that power, His will, never fails to be effectual. In every creature there is a principle of defectibility, else he would be identified with the Creator, who alone is without "variableness." And this principle, which is only a relative defect, though not the *will* of the creature, is yet a source of the manner of willing; otherwise the volitions would not be according to the nature of the agent,—a supposition to the last degree absurd: since if the agent do not will according to his nature, we might reasonably conclude that the Divine volitions *may* be weak, unwise, or unholy! Now, seeing that the will operates according to the nature of which it is the medium, nothing remains but the existence of a *good nature* in order to secure a *good will*. As an effective will follows an effective nature, so a

defective will follows a defective nature. All men, however, have, in themselves considered, a defective nature, and, as fallen, a corrupted nature, ever "inclined to evil." At the same time the will remains free. What then is requisite to secure a *good will* in a *free agent?* An influence from God, I answer, the source of all good, on man's nature, or heart, as the Scriptures often express the idea, while the will, the medium of his power and nature, remains perfectly free, or exempt from compulsion and restraint. Here we have a satisfactory principle to reconcile certainty on the part of God, and freedom on the part of man; a principle, I will venture to affirm, against which no argument can be brought, no denial asserted, which may not be fairly met by a *reductio ad absurdum.* As I am conscious of having no object in view but truth, the establishment of true primary important principles in theology and moral science, I hope it will not be thought unsuitably presuming, if as a private individual I solicit the attention of thinking men to this point, and, if they are so disposed, to bring it to the test of clear and rational objection. Pure gold need not fear the heat of the furnace; and what honest man would wish to give circulation to base coin?

§ 14. We now advert to what the fathers, quoted by the Bishop, say regarding *perseverance.* There is one passage from Ambrose, which, though already produced for another purpose, must not be omitted in this place:—"'*Perseverance* is not of the man who willeth, or of him who runneth; for it is not in the power of man: but *it is of God,* who pitieth, *that you may be able to complete what you have begun.*'"* What Ambrose evidently designs to inculcate is this: that, though it is our incumbent *duty* to will and to run, that is, to use our utmost exertion in the way of holy obedience, the source of our perseverance is "God, who pitieth." If they who have begun well in the race of spiritual and holy obedience, obtain the prize of perfection, this completion is "of God." I believe the modern Calvinists will be very well satisfied with this conclusion—viz., that all those who finally attain the perfection of glory, by perseverance in holiness, attain it by the "power and grace of God." For my own part, I consider all other points, related to the subject, of comparatively little moment. This point is of *practical* utility, as tending to draw the heart to GOD every moment of time and every step of our progress; to Him from

* Refutation. p. 381.

whom our strength is derived, and who alone can crown our efforts with success. But the discussion of the question *à priori*, Who shall persevere? is apt to degenerate into useless speculations, greatly resembling another question, "Are there few that be saved?" The answer of Incarnate Wisdom was not to gratify speculative curiosity, but to rouse to holy solicitude and suitable exertion: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate."

§ 15. Augustine makes these remarks:—"'The thief was justified, who, when all his limbs were fixed upon the cross, and having these two things at liberty, with his *heart* he believed unto righteousness, with his mouth confessed unto salvation, and immediately merited [obtained] this assurance, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." For *his good works would have followed*, if he had lived any considerable time among men, *after he received grace;* they had, however, not preceded.'"* This proves that, in the view of Augustine, "grace received" was a *sure principle* of good works following. And it is for this we contend, that grace received by the will and purpose of God insures persevering obedience and well-doing. The reader will recollect that my present object is not to collect from the writings of the fathers all the passages on the respective points in debate, but to produce from the Bishop's own extracts a few passages that militate, in their fair construction, against his own avowed principles.

§ 16. Let us consider next what the fathers say on the subject of *co-operation*. If at any time they contradict themselves or one another, (as they often do,) that is not my concern. To avoid inconsistencies, the first principles of truth ought to be strong and clear, and well settled in the mind. Neither ingenuity nor even piety (though the latter will avail more than the former) will prove a sufficient substitute in close investigations. However, some of them were far better reasoners than others. Augustine:—"'I have applied my heart to fulfil thy statutes alway.' He who says, "I have applied my heart," had already said, "*Incline my heart* unto thy testimonies," that we may understand that this is at the same time *both the gift of God and the exertion of our own will*. The words of the apostle are, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Why, then, do I work out my salvation with fear and trembling, since it is in my power to work out my salvation? Do you wish to hear why it is to be done with fear and trembling?

* Refutation, p. 438.

"For it is God which worketh in you;" therefore with fear and trembling. Because what the humble man obtains, the proud man loses. If, then, it be God which worketh in us, why is it said, Work out your own salvation? Because *He so worketh in us that we also work.* "Be thou my helper," points out that he also is a worker who calls for a helper.'" * Here Augustine acknowledges, with the Psalmist, that it is God's gift to incline the heart, or to infuse the principle, yet that "He so worketh in us, that we also work," or "exert our own will." The duty is ours to seek, but the operation is first God's, that ours may follow.

§ 17. The same father has the following observations, among many others to the same purpose:—"'To be strengthened with might,' he [the apostle] says, 'by His Spirit.' This is the Spirit of grace. Observe what he desires. He *asks* from God *this very thing* which he *requires* from men; because that God may be willing to give, you also *ought* to suit your will to receive. How can you be *willing* to receive the grace of Divine goodness who do not open the bosom of your *will?* He says, "that He may grant you," for you have it not unless He grants it you: "that He may grant you to be strengthened with might by His Spirit," for if He grants you to be strengthened with might, then He will grant you not to faint. . . . . *The whole is from God;* not, however, as if we were asleep; not as if we exert no endeavour; not as if we do not will. You will be the *work of God,* not only because you are a *man,* but because you are *righteous.* For it is *better* to be righteous than that you should be a man. If *God* made you a man, and *you made yourself righteous,* you make a better thing than God made.' He, however, adds, 'He that made you without yourself does not justify you without yourself. He made you without your knowing it, he justifies you when you are willing.'" † In these passages we observe what God requires of man, that is, "to be willing to receive;" and "this is *the very thing* which we ask from God." We *ought* to have a suitable will; but we have it not of ourselves; therefore we "ask from God this very thing which He requires." This clearly shews that our duty is one thing, our ability another; and, consequently, that without God's immediate and predeterminating influence, the effect will not follow. "The whole is from God," yet not so as to excuse our supineness. If we could not "make ourselves," much less can we "make ourselves

* Refutation, pp. 430, 431. † Ibid., pp. 433, 434.

righteous." Yet is our voluntary concurrence required, without which we have no right to expect the blessing. The same author observes elsewhere, that "'the *will itself* and the action are assisted by God, and so assisted that we *cannot will* or do anything well without that assistance.'" And again:—"'We have proved, by the foregoing testimonies of the Holy Scriptures, that there is free-will in man, to live well and to act rightly; so let us see what the Divine testimonies are concerning *grace, without which we can do nothing.*'" *

§ 18. Chrysostom, speaking of Judas and Peter, observes:—"'The one, *enjoying great assistance,* was not benefited, because he was not willing, and did not contribute his own exertions; but the other, [Peter,] *having a ready will, fell because he did not enjoy any assistance,* for *virtue is composed of these two things.* Wherefore, I beseech you not to be supine, referring everything to God, nor to think that, being diligent, you can do everything right by your own labours. In these mysteries *it is the part of God to give grace,* and *of man to supply faith.*'" † In one part of this passage we have a very important truth, that "virtue is composed of these two things," Divine assistance and "a ready will." But when the author represents Peter as "having a ready will" *when* he "fell," his notions are confused; and when he speaks of Judas as "enjoying great assistance," he is more declamatory than judicious. For what evidence is there that Judas had more assistance than Peter, or that Peter *when he fell* had a more ready will than Judas? That Judas had "great assistance," in one sense, is plain, from the circumstance of his being one of the twelve apostles: he enjoyed converse with Christ, heard His discourses, saw His miracles, preached repentance, partook of the Sacred Supper, &c. But this "assistance," or more properly *privilege,* was common to all the apostles, irrespective of the state of their minds. In representing Peter as "not enjoying any assistance" when he *fell,* the meaning of the words is evidently changed from that of external privilege to internal operation; for it is a plain fact that the former continued with Peter as well as with Judas. It was, therefore, the internal operation of grace that Peter did not enjoy when he fell; in other words, he was left to himself. Nor is there any evidence that this was not the case *always* with Judas as far as relates to real piety. When Chrysos-

* Refutation, pp. 448, 449. † Ibid., pp. 488, 491.

tom says, "it is the part of God to give *grace*," he must mean, in order to be consistent with himself, internal influence; since it is that, in connexion with a ready will, of which "virtue is composed," which must needs be inward grace. This is further evident from its being represented as that "assistance" which Peter "did not enjoy" when his fall was occasioned; while he *did* enjoy every external assistance as at other times. Of inward grace, therefore, and a ready will, "virtue is composed." Consequently no exercise of will can be virtuous which has not grace for its principle. Yet this principle itself is not *virtue*, but the basis or principle of virtue which influences the will to what is properly called virtue or a virtuous action. Thus "virtue is composed of these two things;" and thus also "it is the part of God to give grace, and of men to supply faith," or to exercise *belief*.

§ 19. We shall now, finally, examine what the same father, Chrysostom, says upon *human weakness*:—"'In proof of what I have said, I will quote to you the words of Christ himself: He said to Peter, "Behold, Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." What does this sifting mean? To whirl about, to move, to shake, as when things are sifted; but I, says He, prevented it, knowing that you cannot bear temptation. For the expression "that your faith may not fail," shews that *if He had permitted, his faith would have failed.*'"* This passage is explanatory of the preceding, shewing that the assistance which Peter "did not enjoy" was a partial, not a total defect. The assistance so far continued as to preserve the existence of faith as a principle, but not so far as to preserve its victorious exercise. For while the principle, as well as the exercise of faith admits of degrees of vigour, its existence depends not on its own indefectible nature, much less on the potency of free-will, but on the power and continued influence of Christ. So great is human weakness, even in the vessels of mercy, in proficients, in Peter, the courageous, zealous, determined disciple of Christ, that "if He had permitted, his faith," root and branch, "would have failed." That he had free-will is certain; but free-will of itself is weak and unstable. If faith cannot stand its ground without the substratum of grace, assisting and upholding grace, how can free-will?

* Refutation, p. 459.

Section III.

Quotations from the Fathers, doubtful in Expression, but not Meaning, against the Calvinists.

§ 1. Passages respecting *two natures*, from Ignatius, Irenæus, and Origen. § 2. Remarks on *ancient heretics* who held two natures. § 3. On Marcion, Bardesanes, and Valentinus. § 4. Basilides and Carpocrates. § 5. Manes. § 6, 7. Observations on these heresiarchs, and their dogmas. § 8. Quotations on Christ's *purchase*, from Clement of Rome; § 9. From Athanasius; and, § 10. From Jerome. § 11. Concerning *human worthiness*, from Justin Martyr. § 12. Remarks on Justin; and, § 13. On the term *worthiness*. § 14. Quotations on the same subject, from Cyril; also, § 15, 16. From Basil and Chrysostom. § 17. These views compared with Scripture. § 18. On the insufficiency of *reason*, from Justin Martyr. § 19. On a *necessity* of consequence, from Justin Martyr. § 20. The subject continued, from Justin, Chrysostom, and Irenæus. § 21. On man's *right*, from Tertullian. § 22. On *free-will* and *power*, from Tertullian; also, § 23. From Origen, Eusebius, and Augustine; and, § 24, 25. From Justin Martyr. § 26. The same subject pursued, from Origen. § 27, 28. Remarks on his opinion about the *beginning* of receding from good. § 29–31. On *grace* and *free-agency*, from Irenæus and Hilary. § 32. On *faith*, from Irenæus; § 33. From Cyril; and, § 34. From Chrysostom. § 35. On *regeneration*, from Gregory Nazianzen; and, § 36, 37. From Justin Martyr. § 38. On *election*, from Jerome. § 39. Concluding remarks.

§ 1. Many quotations are produced by the Bishop against the Calvinists, in which the fathers reprobate the notion of *two natures* in man. And this is done, probably, because we sometimes speak of two natures in the Christian—one corrupt, and the other holy. We maintain that every true or spiritual Christian has a depraved nature from the first Adam, and a spiritual nature or principle from the second Adam. How, indeed, any one can deny this statement without, at the same time, impugning the authority of the inspired writings upon the point, is to me inconceivable; nor am I able to form a conjecture how the Bishop of Lincoln can controvert the sentiment we contend for, without condemning a great part of his own "Refutation." Let us, however, attend to some of the fathers upon the subject of *two natures* in men. Ignatius:—"'I do not speak of two *natures of men*;' but that the *one man* is sometimes of God, sometimes of the devil. If any one be pious, he is a man of God; but if any one be impious,

he is a man of the devil, being made so, not by nature, but by his own will.'"* This is an entire quotation. Another follows from Irenæus:—"'Subdividing souls themselves, they say that some are by nature good, and some by nature bad.'"† Again, from the last-mentioned author:—"'They [the Valentinians] say that some men are good by nature, and some bad.'"‡ Again, from Clement of Alexandria we have this insulated extract:—"'He, [Valentinus,] too, like Basilides, supposes a race (γένος) which is saved by nature.'"§ Of the same kind is the following passage from Origen:—"'Those who, coming from the schools of Marcion, and Valentinus, and Basilides, have been taught that there are different natures of souls.'"‖

§ 2. The reader may well express his surprise at the Bishop's conduct in producing these extracts against the Calvinists. Indeed, the *words* "two natures" may be found occasionally in Calvinistic writers; but is there any similarity of sentiment between them and the quoted heresies? Not the least. The Saturninians, Marcionites, Bardesanians, Valentinians, Basilidians, Carpocratians, &c., according to a corrupt philosophy, or rather a visionary hypothesis, held that two creators formed two kinds of men, possessed of two natures directly opposite, according to the characters of the two deities—that is, one benevolent, the other malignant. Saturninus held the doctrine of two eternal principles, one good and the other evil; that this world and its inhabitants were created by subordinate deities; that the "nature" given to men by their immediate creator was a mere animal life; that the good eternal principle added to them another nature, which was a rational soul. Thus, according to this insane dreamer, every man had "two natures," derived from two creators; and, to perfect his folly, he further held that there are two kinds of men—the one kind, just mentioned, who are by "nature" well disposed; the other kind, formed by the evil deity, who are by "nature" wickedly disposed; and that the difference now subsisting among men, as good and bad, must arise from these causes.

§ 3. Marcion also had similar notions respecting two eternal principles, one good, the other evil, and a middle deity besides, who had himself two mixed natures, composed of something good and something bad. Mankind, he fancied, had "two natures"—

* Refutation, p. 288. † Ibid., p. 514. ‡ Ibid., p. 515.
§ Ibid., p. 518. ‖ Ibid., p. 520.

good and bad; and this middle deity and the evil principle were perpetually contending for dominion over these "two natures" respectively. Bardesanes also held that mankind had "two natures," one formed by the Supreme Being, the other by an evil principle, the prince and author of all wickedness and misery. From the former proceeded reason; from the latter, passion. To this he added, that all matter was of a "malignant nature," and consequently all human bodies, whose original framer was the evil principle. Valentinus, in like manner, maintained that mankind had "two natures," consisting of an equal portion of what was gross; while the framer of these two natures was not the Supreme Being, but a generated deity whom he called the *Demiurge*. This offspring of two of the *Eons* (of whom Valentinus created more than thirty) is represented as arbitrary and arrogant, aspiring to supreme dominion, as the God of the Jews, keeping mankind in slavery, &c.; but Jesus, one of the *Eons*, came to our world to chastise *Demiurge*, and to deliver mankind from his tyranny! It must not be omitted that the mother of this tyrannical pretender resolved to add to the two natures which her son gave to mankind a third nature, far better than the other two.

§ 4. Basilides was a mystic of no less extravagance. He held that mankind had "two natures," derived from two sources: that is, one nature from malignant matter, self-animated and eternal, but moulded originally into human form by angelic hands; the other nature was a principle of reason added to it by the kindness of the Supreme Deity. But still He left them under the dominion of their first formers; who themselves, in process of time, fell into a state of depravity. To complete his blasphemous nonsense, he asserted that one of these was the God of the Jews; to counteract whose pretensions, and to deliver mankind from the "two natures" now enslaved, Christ was sent by His Father, the Supreme Deity. Carpocrates differed little from Basilides, except by adding a still greater portion of impiety to his philosophical reveries.

§ 5. These heresies, among many others of minor consideration, made their appearance in the second century. In the third, the *Manichæans* made themselves prominent. Manes, the Persian, also held "two natures" in mankind—one sensual, the other rational; the latter derived from a good, the former from an evil deity. This impious magician, in common with the rabblement of Gnostics before mentioned, pronounced all matter to be eternally corrupt,

and, therefore, denied a resurrection. The human body, he supposed, was originally formed by the prince of darkness, and was the prison of man's "two natures," or "two souls;" and the design of Christ, in coming into our world, was to liberate the better nature both from its lustful companion and from its prison; when, having completed His mission, He returned to His native residence, the sun, favouring the better part of mankind with Manes as His Paraclete!

§ 6. Such is a concise account of the fantastical impieties of these heresiarchs,—who, leaving the plain scriptures of truth, bewildered themselves and their followers among the fables and mythologies of the oriental heathen philosophy, falsely so called,—and to whom the Bishop of Lincoln would apparently be very glad to persuade us that the Calvinists are closely allied. "Opinions of earliest Heretics resembling tenets of Calvinism," *proved* from the ancient fathers! Nothing can be plainer: as these heretics held that there are "two natures" in men, so the Calvinists maintain that "by nature we are children of wrath," have a "carnal mind," which is "enmity against God," and that, by a plan of mercy and grace, some are "made partakers of the Divine nature."

§ 7. On the heresies above recited I would make a few remarks:—1. The specimens produced of the tenets of their leaders are but a small part of their profane jargon. 2. Some of them put forth their germs in the apostolic age, and by degrees grew up, and infested a great part of the Christian Church, for many centuries, though often assuming different aspects, according to the prepossessions of each prominent leader. 3. Many of them, not content with dogmatising with a fertile imagination, unrestrained either by judgment or any tolerable consistency, permitted their infatuated adherents to indulge in the most licentious practices. 4. It is not surprising if the ancient fathers frequently adverted to their tenets and practices in their discourses and writings. 5. A proper knowledge of the prevailing heresy which each writer or speaker had in view, is the true key to open the meaning of many arguments and phrases employed by the Christian fathers. 6. The Bishop of Lincoln has widely erred of the mark, while comparing the Gnostic and Manichæan notions of "two natures" in men, with the sentiments of Calvinists, who keep closely to God's Holy Word, respecting the true character of Jehovah and the real state of man, as either sinful or gracious.

§ 8. We shall now examine what some of the fathers remark on *Christ's purchase.* Clement of Rome has this passage:—"'Let us look steadfastly at the blood of Christ, and see how precious His blood is in the sight of God; which being shed for our salvation, *has obtained the grace of repentance for all the world.* Let us search into all ages, and learn that our Lord has, in every one of them, given *opportunity for repentance* to all such as are willing to turn unto Him.'" * This quotation may have some appearance of opposition to modern Calvinists, otherwise it would not have been produced by his Lordship as an entire extract, unconnected with other matter. But where is the reality of opposition? Clement explains what he means by "the grace of repentance" by an "opportunity of repentance;" and we maintain precisely the same. We profess that "the blood of Christ" (expressive of His whole humiliation unto death) is a price of infinite value; that the proclamation of this plan of mercy is a "grace," a great favour, affording to the children of men an "opportunity for repentance;" and that "all such as are willing to return" unto God through Jesus Christ, shall obtain "forgiveness of sin, according to the riches of His grace." Nor is it true that we hold (whatever might be the conclusion of Calvin) that there is any reprobating decree to prevent repentance.

§ 9. The following passage from Athanasius has more an apparent than a real opposition to our sentiments:—"'By His death *salvation came to all, and every creature was ransomed.* He is the life of all, even He, who like a sheep gave up His own body to death, as *a ransom for the salvation of all.* . . . . That He might *take away sin from all the race.*'" † These expressions, I conceive, must have been designed to convey one of these two ideas: either, first, that "all the race" of mankind are to be actually delivered from the guilt, power, and effects of sin; or, secondly, that the death of Christ is an adequate ransom, or price of redemption, for all, in such a sense as to entitle all who apply for an interest in it on gospel terms. The former his Lordship will not assert, I presume; and with the latter meaning we agree. The provision made, or divinely constituted, is all-sufficient, and thereby an opportunity is afforded to all, to whom these glad tidings are proposed, for the remission of sin, and for obtaining salvation.

* Refutation, p. 288. † Ibid., pp. 345, 346.

§ 10. The quotation from Jerome which follows indicates a degree of rashness in the manner of assertion, but his meaning is far from being opposed to us; and I may add, that many passages might be easily adduced out of Calvin's works of a similar tendency. Jerome's words are:—"'John the Baptist utters a falsehood when he points to Christ, and says, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world!" if there be still *persons in the world whose sins Christ has not taken away.*'"* What can the author intend, but that the atonement made is of adequate sufficiency for all? Surely he could not mean that the minds and consciences of all persons in the world were freed from the dominion of sin, or "purged from dead works." But as there does not appear any middle meaning, and as he could not intend the latter, we agree with him in the former. "The blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth us," to whom it is applied, "from all sin." To assert that it takes away sin from those persons to whom it is not applied, is to contradict the whole tenor of Scripture, and to outrage common sense, while the sentiment itself is of the most licentious tendency. But to maintain that the sacrifice for sin is adequately sufficient for every person in the world, and is mercifully proposed as such to be received, on the terms of repentance and faith, without any reprobating decree to the contrary, is, in my apprehension, "a doctrine according to godliness." I must, however, observe, that neither chance, nor yet the potent force of free-will, is ever likely to put any person in possession of its efficacy, without the assistance of sovereign grace.

§ 11. His Lordship has quoted some passages out of the fathers which relate to *human worthiness,* that appear adverse to our sentiments; the opposition still being more in sound than in sense. For example, Justin Martyr says:—"'We maintain that no wicked or covetous person, no traitor, no virtuous person can escape God; and that every one will go into everlasting punishment or salvation *according to the merit of his actions.* . . . . That punishments and chastisements and *good rewards* are given *according to the worth of the actions of every one,* having learnt it from the prophets, we declare it to be true.'"† Here probably the Bishop supposes that Justin maintains a doctrine which we deny. We sometimes say, that we have no merit of our own to recommend us to

* Refutation, p. 411. † Ibid., p. 291.

the favour of God; and he says that rewards and punishments are (*κατ' ἀξίαν τῶν πρᾶξεων*) "according to the worthiness of the actions" of every one. In the original the phrase in both places is precisely the same; though in one place *translated* "worth," in the other "merit." Perhaps these terms are considered as synonymous; however, we hold no doctrine inconsistent with what Justin evidently intends. Actions have worthiness in one respect, and not in another; or for one end, and not for another.

§ 12. When we profess that we have "no merit of our own," or "no worthiness of our own," to recommend us to God, we mean that we have nothing which can be a ground of pardon and acceptance, in the sense of the apostle, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us." The contrast here is, between our works, with any worth or merit they may have, and another ground of recommendation and acceptance appointed and revealed. This is no other than the mercy of God through the atoning sacrifice of Christ. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ," who is the foundation of apostolic doctrine, and the foundation of our faith, repentance, and hope. But should any one tell us, that there is no difference in the *quality* of actions, that one is not better or more worthy than another, as some of the heretics opposed by Justin did, and some sceptics now do; we would reply with him, that human actions *have* a quality of worthiness or unworthiness, that there *is* an essential difference between obedience and disobedience, and that this difference will be produced in judgment. This the Holy Scriptures abundantly testify. "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."* "Wherefore we labour, [or, endeavour,] that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."†

§ 13. "Worthiness" is a comparative idea. Only a person properly Divine is "worthy" of religious adoration. No one in the universe, but "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," the Divine Redeemer, was found "*worthy*" to open the "book" of prophecy. Compared with God's perfect law, and the requirements of holiness

* Eccles. xii. 14. † 2 Cor. v. 9, 10.

and justice, no descendant of Adam is found "worthy" to say, I am perfectly conformed to them. Only Jesus Christ was, in this respect, "worthy;" and therefore to His worthiness, and not to our own, we as imperfect creatures are directed to look, that, interested in Him, we may be able to plead exemption from the penalty we have incurred by transgressions and failures. But if we compare the penitent with the impenitent, the believing with the unbelieving, the virtuous with the vicious, the holy with the unholy, the obedient with the disobedient, or the fruitful with the fruitless; then we justly say, that the former are "worthy" and the latter are worthless. The one sort is approved, the other disapproved; the one is rewarded according to the Divine promise, the other punished according to the Divine threatening. And in this sense we can freely say with Justin, "that every one will go into everlasting punishment or salvation according to the *worthiness* [*i.e.*, the moral character] of his actions."

§ 14. In the same manner we agree with Cyril of Jerusalem, when he says, "'Have, O man, a sincere soul, on account of Him who searcheth the heart and the reins. For as those who are about to enlist soldiers examine the ages and persons of those whom they enlist, so the Lord also, in choosing souls for His service, examines the will, and if any one has a concealed hypocrisy, He immediately rejects him as unfit for true service. But if He finds a person *worthy*, He readily gives him grace. He does not give that which is holy to the dogs.'"* Who is the "worthy person?" The sincere, as opposed to the hypocrite. What does God give him? A *peculiar favour*, the "seal of salvation," as he further explains it. And this we also maintain as perfectly scriptural. "Thou requirest truth in the inward parts." "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."

§ 15. Thus also Basil:—"'The Lord will take away strength from a sinful people, but He gives strength to them who act justly. "For unto every one that hath shall be given;" but he who is *enabled to do good works* becomes *worthy of a blessing from God.*'"† This is an entire quotation brought against the Calvinists; but for what possible purpose, maintaining as we do, that he who is "enabled to do good works" becomes "worthy [*i.e.*, a suitable subject] of an *additional* blessing from God?" We also

* Refutation, p. 347. † Ibid., p. 366.

agree with the following passage in Chrysostom :—"'Let us then, I beseech you, imitate that just person, and be *diligent to contribute our exertions, that we may make ourselves worthy* [*i.e.*, suitable subjects] of assistance from God. For on that account He waits for opportunities from us, that He may display His great kindness. Let us not, then, through negligence deprive ourselves of His gifts; but let us hasten and be eager to lay hold of the beginning, and to enter on the path that leads to virtue, that, enjoying assistance from above, we may be able to arrive at the end: for we cannot rightly do anything that is good, if we do not enjoy aid from above.'" * What Calvinist ever supposed that men ought to remain in a state of stupid indifference or criminal negligence in order to obtain "assistance from God," and enjoy "aid from above," without which "we cannot rightly do anything which is good?" Do not we also, with Chrysostom, endeavour to rouse men from their lethargy, exhorting them to search the Scriptures, to examine themselves, to consider their ways, to attend to God's testimony, and assuring them that they have no right to expect either Divine assistance, or any blessing from God, but in a diligent use of appointed means?

§ 16. To the same purpose are many other passages of this author, particularly the following :—"'Since, then, there are such snares, and such attacks, do Thou lead me in the way; for I have need of Thy assistance. For *to be led in the way is derived from Him;* but *let it be our endeavour to be worthy* of being conducted by that hand. For if you be unclean, that hand does not direct you; or if you be covetous or have any other spot.'" † "*Worthy* of being conducted," that is, *guidable.* Now this is what we constantly inculcate upon our children and domestics, our auditors and associates. Does his Lordship suppose that we wish them to continue obstinate and refractory, or remain like blocks until they are spiritually animated? Again :—"'He speaks of the inexpressible blessings of those who received Him, and briefly comprehends them in these words, saying, "As many as received him, he gave them power to become the sons of God." Whether they be slaves, whether they be free; whether they be Greeks, barbarians, or Scythians; whether they be unwise or wise; whether they be women or men; whether they be young or old; whether they be ignoble or noble; whether they be rich or poor; whether they be

* Refutation, p. 463 † Ibid., p. 469.

governors, or whether they be governed; he says, *all are thought worthy of the same honour.*'" * This passage clearly proves with what latitude Chrysostom, in common with the other Greek fathers, used the term (ἄξιος) *worthy*. "All are thought worthy," that is, *suitable objects*, to whom the gospel, the universal favour, should be proclaimed; the inequality of their conditions, whether external or internal, forming no bar of exception. And when they by "faith, and the grace of the Spirit," as he afterwards adds, receive the proffered blessing, they have "stamped upon them one royal character." Thus, in both respects, they are *alike* "worthy."

§ 17. In a similar latitude of meaning the Sacred Scriptures use not only the terms worthy and unworthy, but also clean and unclean, holy and unholy, with many others. Thus it was revealed to Peter, that the Gentiles ought not to be regarded any longer unclean, unholy, or unworthy of the gospel message, in the view of a merciful God. By the mediatorial work of Christ, "the middle wall of partition" was pulled down, and in this respect all nations were thought equally "worthy" of the benefit. "What God hath cleansed, call not thou common or unclean." If God regard the vilest of characters "worthy," in this relative sense, of having salvation by Christ proclaimed to them, so should we; and hence our exertions to send missionaries to idolaters, and the most abandoned of human characters among the heathen. But who would infer thence, that they are worthy in a moral sense, before a change in them is effected? When, indeed, any of them become new creatures in Christ Jesus, and manifest by repentance, faith, and new obedience, that they have "the grace of the Spirit," they are thought "worthy" of Christian fellowship. And when, as professing Christians, they shew the reality of their faith and profession of godliness by their works,—walking in the holy ways of Christ, exemplifying the peculiar spirit of Christianity, and persevering therein unto the end of life,—we are bound in charity, judging according to the testimony of God's word, to believe that they are "*worthy* to walk with the Lamb in white;" that is, are suitable subjects to receive such favour.

§ 18. We sometimes speak of the insufficiency of the powers of *reason* for answering certain purposes in religion, and therefore we are confronted with the following language of Justin Martyr:—

"'Our original existence was not owing to ourselves; but to follow

* Refutation, p. 489.

those things which are pleasing to Him, *through the powers of reason* with which He has endowed us, *this persuades us and leads us to faith.*'" * But what Calvinist opposes the use of reason for *this* purpose? Reason is the faculty by which we compare ideas, and draw conclusions. By this faculty we are enabled to investigate the evidences of revealed religion, to compare the claims of a pretended revelation with the true, to compare scripture with scripture, and one dispensation of religion with another. By this faculty we examine the Divine testimony concerning the person, the work, and character of Jesus Christ, and conclude that He not only claims, but also deserves our hearts and lives; and thus, "through the powers of reason," we are led to *believe.* In this respect, *reason* "persuades us, and leads us to faith," and this is evidently Justin's meaning.

§ 19. Because the modern Calvinists advocate the cause of a *necessity of consequence,* in opposition to absolute contingence or mere chance, the Bishop has produced many quotations from the fathers, in order to shew that their sentiments and ours are opposed to each other. Justin Martyr:—"'But lest any one should imagine that I am asserting that things happen according to the *necessity of fate,* because I have said that things are foreknown, I proceed to refute that opinion also. . . . . And, again, if mankind had not the power by *free-will* to avoid what is disgraceful, and to choose what is good, they would not be responsible for their actions.'" † We also, as well as Justin, deny a *fatal necessity* of persons and actions. Fate, or the doctrine of fate, declares, that persons and actions are necessary in such a sense, that they could not have been otherwise; now this we reject, because we believe that there is neither a person nor an action which might not have been otherwise had it been the good pleasure of God. Supposing, however, persons placed hypothetically, in certain circumstances; notwithstanding any conceivable freedom of will, nothing is contingent to the view of God. He knows what He will do, and He knows what we will do. If He pleases, we shall do well; but if left to our own defectibility, and its negative cause, He knows we will not do well, though everything which it becomes Him as a righteous Governor to grant should continue the same. The positive cause of all our good is from Him, but the negative cause of all our evil is from ourselves exclusively; free-will in both cases

* Refutation, p. 291. † Ibid., pp. 291, 292.

remaining the same, as before proved. It is a manifest absurdity to talk of a free action, when past, as having no ground of its existence either in God or in the creature before it took place. Every action had some cause, either efficient or deficient, else it never could have taken place; and this cause, be it what it may, must be known to God no less before than after the act. To omniscience, therefore, the act must appear certainly future, if that foreknown cause be not prevented by Him who alone is adequate to prevent it. And this certain futurition of all events which actually take place, we properly denominate *hypothetical* necessity, and sometimes a necessity of consequence. These distinctions we are constrained to make in polemic discussions, though we think it unsuitable and needless to impose them on unlearned auditories.

§ 20. The subsequent passages are of similar import. Justin Martyr:—"'Neither do we say, that men act or suffer *according to fate*, but that every one does rightly, or sins, *according to his choice.*'"* His choice, beyond doubt, is the *immediate* cause of the quality of his actions; but this does not imply that the choice itself had no adequate cause, or that it was not foreknown as a future certainty. Chrysostom:—"'Christ says, "It must needs be that offences come," not weakening the freedom of choice, nor imposing any *necessity* or *force* upon our conduct, but foretelling what would *certainly* happen from the wicked disposition of men, which was about to happen, not because of His prediction, but because of the disposition of those who would admit of no remedy. For those things did not happen because He foretold them; but *because they would certainly happen*, therefore He foretold them.'"† What can be plainer than this quotation in favour of our hypothetical necessity? We are sufficiently persuaded, and so was Chrysostom, that the will of man is free, and yet there was a sufficient cause of the event as a ground of certainty. What *kind* of necessity Chrysostom does oppose is explained by himself, when he contrasts it with "freedom of choice," and explains it by the term "force,"—an explanation in which we fully coincide. To the same effect is Irenæus's remark:—"'All these things shew the free-will of man, and the counsel of God, exhorting against disobedience, but *not forcing our wills.*'"‡ Also Clement of Alexandria:—"'Neither praise, nor dispraise, nor honours, nor punishments, would be just, if the soul had not the power of desiring and

* Refutation, p. 297. † Ibid., p. 497. ‡ Ibid., p. 305.

rejecting, and if vice were *involuntary.*'" * We hold no necessity that implies "forcing our wills," and which renders our actions "involuntary."

§ 21. Tertullian very properly observes:—"'Every one has a *right* belonging to *man*, and a natural power to worship that which he *thinks right;* nor is any one injured or benefited by the religion of another. Nor is it *any part* of religion to *force religion*, which ought to be taken up *spontaneously, not by force.*'" † As the Bishop, in order to be consistent with his profession, must hold that the Established Church is allied to, and inseparably connected with the state, and as he asserts that his Church "is not Calvinistic," ‡ he must, in self-consistency, exonerate the Calvinists from the public enforcing "Act of Uniformity." Why, then, it is natural to ask, does he produce this entire quotation from Tertullian against us? Do we not maintain that "every one has a *right* to worship as he thinks right?" Or does he suppose that with us it is a "part of religion to *force* religion?" Or does he imagine that we have some enchanting chains with which we are able to drag "by force" an audience ἑκὼν ἀεκοντιγε θυμω? Were we to judge merely from the tendency of the quotation, we might suppose it to have been introduced to overthrow Acts of Uniformity, or to encourage the separatist to stand firm to his principles in opposition to civil "force" in matters of religion. But whatever might be his Lordship's real motive for transcribing the passage, he has most effectually concealed it from vulgar scrutiny.

§ 22. We have in the "Refutation" several quotations from the fathers which treat of *free-will* and *power*, as if they stood "opposed to the tenets of Calvinism;" but which, in their genuine import, are perfectly consistent with those tenets. Thus, for instance, Tertullian:—"'A law would not have been imposed on a person who had not *in his power* [*i.e.*, at his option] the obedience due to the law; nor again would transgression have been threatened with death, if the contempt also of the law were not placed to the account of *free-will*. . . . . He who should be found good or bad by *necessity and not voluntarily*, could not with justice receive the retribution of either good or evil. . . . . Moreover, if you ask *whence that will comes*, by which we will anything *contrary to the will of God*, I will tell you: *it comes from ourselves.*'" § The whole

* Refutation, p. 312.
† Ibid., p. 318.
‡ Ibid, p. 590.
§ Ibid., pp. 319, 320.

connexion shews that the author meant by the phrase "in his power" the same idea as is expressed by "at his option," in opposition to that which destroys liberty. In the last sentence, Tertullian advances a very important sentiment, though it is more than probable that he was not aware of all the truth which the expressions are well adapted to convey. The sinfulness of a choice "comes from ourselves." He was fully aware that the physical power of willing and choosing comes from God; what he therefore intends is the source of its "contrariety to the will of God," and which, in the strictest and fullest sense, "comes from ourselves" exclusively. This is that negative principle of defectibility which God has not in Himself, and cannot possibly *impart* to the creature, because it is no object of power: I will add, that it is the only principle by which we can possibly account, in a satisfactory manner, for an endless number of phenomena in the moral world. Were it better understood by inquisitive minds, it would exclude a thousand perplexities, shew the folly of many past controversies, and exhibit in the most amiable light the true character of the blessed God.

§ 23. Origen very well observes, (why his Lordship has quoted the passage against the Calvinists is best known to himself:)—"'The soul is endowed with *free-will*, and is *at liberty* to incline either way; and therefore the judgment of God is just, because the human soul, *of its own accord*, obeys either good or bad advisers.'"* The same introductory remark is applicable to the following observation of Eusebius:—"'So that it must be altogether acknowledged that *we have liberty*, and *the free-will of a rational and intelligent nature*.'"† Does his Lordship know any Calvinist, or can he produce any Calvinistic author, who does not accord with Eusebius's remark? Again, Augustine says:—"'Every one is author of his own sin. Whence, if you doubt, attend to what is said above, that sins are avenged by the justice of God; for they would not be justly avenged unless they were committed with the *will*. It follows, that nothing makes the mind a companion of lust, except its *own free-will*.'"‡ Who doubts it?

§ 24. On the same subject, Justin Martyr, in his Dialogue with Trypho, the Jewish fatalist, observes:—"'But that those, whether angels or men, who are foreknown that they would be unjust, *are not wicked through the fault of God*, but that *each through his*

* Refutation, p. 339. † Ibid., p. 343. ‡ Ibid., p. 413.

own fault is what he is, I have shewn above. But that you may not have any pretence for saying that Christ *must necessarily* have been crucified, or that in *your* [our] *race* there are transgressors, and that it *could not have been otherwise*, I have already observed in few words, that God, desiring that men and angels should follow His will, determined to make them *with full power* [freedom] *to act justly*, with the means of knowing by whom they were made, and through whom they were called into existence out of nothing; and with this condition, that they were to be judged by Him if they acted contrary to right reason; and we men and angels shall be by ourselves convicted of having acted wickedly, unless we make haste to repent. But if the Word of God declares beforehand, that some, both angels and men, will be hereafter punished, *because He knows* that they would persevere to the last in wickedness, *He foretold it*, but *not that God made them such.* Wherefore, if they will repent, *all who are willing* to obtain mercy from God, *have it in their power* [*i.e.*, at their option;] and the word pronounces them happy, saying, Blessed is he to whom God shall not impute sin.'" *

§ 25. Here Justin evidently combats *fatalism.* He shews that angels and men "are not wicked through the fault of God," but "each through his own fault." And is not this the doctrine of modern Calvinists? And when he replies to Trypho's objection, (ὅτι ἐδει Χριστὸν σταυρωθηναι,) "that Christ must necessarily have been crucified," and that (ἐν τω γενει ἡμων) "in our race there are transgressors," and "that it could not have been otherwise," he remarks, in opposition to fatal necessity, that it was God's counsel and will (ποιησαι τουτους αὐτεξουσις προς δίκαιοπραξιαν) "to make them with full freedom, or *at their own disposal*, to act justly." His object clearly is to establish freedom as opposed to fate: and this is further evident by his denying "that God made them such," that is, *wicked.* Then he further shews, against the *fatal* system, that "all who are *willing* to obtain mercy from God (δυνανται) "*may*," or *have it at their option.* They "have it in their power," in the sense of a *potentia non peccandi;* that is, they are not forced to sin, but are left at perfect liberty from sinning. So that neither God nor fate urges them on to be wicked, or to "persevere to the last in wickedness." And when he says that it was not *necessary* that Christ should be crucified,

* Refutation, pp. 295, 296.

he could not mean, without frightful impiety, that it was in no sense necessary, but that it was not by *fatal* necessity: He came to be a Saviour, not by fate, but by the merciful counsel and gracious pleasure of God. Nevertheless, as the crucifixion of Christ was infallibly certain, before it took place, it was therefore hypothetically necessary. For IF Christ came into our world as a perfect character, according to the Divine purpose, and IF devils and wicked men (whose wickedness *originated in themselves*) were not restrained in the execution of their purpose, there was an infallible ground of certainty, notwithstanding their freedom to any conceivable degree. All that was good in the whole affair was from God; all that was wicked, from the wickedness of the agents exclusively. God's part was effected by Him, but the wickedness of the agents was only permitted, or not hindered. And He well knew how to overrule their evil designs for the good of men and for His own praise. "The wrath of man shall praise thee, and the remainder of wrath wilt thou restrain."

§ 26. In the same manner are to be understood the following quotations from Origen:—"'This also is settled in the doctrine of the Church, that *every rational soul has free-will*, and that it has to contend against the devil and his angels, and the powers which oppose it, because they strive to burden it with sins: but we, if we live rightly and prudently, endeavour to rescue ourselves from this kind of burden. Whence, consequently, we may understand, that *we are not subject to necessity, so as to be compelled by all means* to do either bad or good things, *although it be against our will.* For if we be masters of our will, some powers, perhaps, may urge us to sin, and others assist us to safety; yet we are not *compelled by necessity* to act either rightly or wrongly. There is no nature which does not admit of good or evil, *except the nature of God, which is the foundation of all good.* The Creator indulged the minds formed by Himself with voluntary and free motions, that the good in them might be their own, since it was preserved by their own will; but *indolence and dislike of exertion in preserving good*, and aversion and indifference to better things, *caused the beginning of receding from good.*'"* In these passages many important verities are contained:—"Every rational soul has free-will." "We are not subject to necessity, so as to be *compelled* by all means, although it be *against our will.*" "The

* Refutation, pp. 322, 323.

nature of God, which is the foundation of all good, does not admit of good or evil;" but "there is *no other* nature which does not." "Indolence and dislike of exertion in preserving good, and aversion and indifference to better things, *caused the beginning of receding from good*." This last sentence is an attempt to account for the origin of moral evil; and is unobjectionable, as far as it goes.

§ 27. But as Origen was writing on a point of moral philosophy, an opponent had a right to ask, *how* came "indolence and dislike," or *how* came "aversion and indifference," to take place in free agents? Is not each of these a moral evil? Is moral evil the cause of itself? or, is it uncaused? Surely to be uncaused is the exclusive prerogative of the self-existent Being. Here neither Origen, nor any of the fathers, have a word to say, but merely impose silence upon the inquirer. But why must he be silent? Because "*secret* things belong to God." The inquirer, however, urges that this is a mere evasion, until evidence is produced that it *ought* to be reckoned among the Divine arcana; for that there *are* many things of that description, does by no means prove that this is one of them. But it is *unprofitable* to inquire further. What! supposing the truth be ascertained, and one of the most radical of all truths. How can you prove to me, adds the querist, that *any* truth, especially any primary truth in morals, is unprofitable? I do not want to pry into forbidden secrets, but tell me plainly, without any evasion, what is the true cause of criminal indolence, or dislike, or aversion, or indifference? Probably the right knowledge of the cause of the disease may lead me to the remedy; and surely this will be a very *profitable* thing. He receives for answer, If we can but be content with our ignorance of this punctilio "till we get to heaven," we shall then know all about it. He replies, If you were to call the cause of gravitation or the motions of the heavenly bodies a "punctilio," it might be endured; but I can never admit, while I possess the use of my faculties, that the cause of "indolence" should be viewed in that light. Besides, if I have not a cure of indolence, (towards which the knowledge of the cause may be very profitable,) I may never get to heaven! I want, therefore, to know it now, if knowable; and the sooner the better. But it is one of the *unknowables*. A bold assertion; how came you to *know* that? Is it self-evident, or will it admit of proof? And be pleased to recollect, if you cannot

prove it to be among the "unknowables," even *you* must allow that it may be known.

§ 28. Whatever God in His wisdom and mercy has revealed, or has not revealed, we may be morally certain that He has not prohibited so profitable a knowledge as that of the cause and cure of "indolence!" If I look into myself, I may see not only a depraved nature, but also a negative principle of defectibility. By this I am alarmed, and flee to GOD as my helper. The more clearly I perceive the cause of indolence or indifference, and, at the same time, the cause of its cure, the more I cleave to God all-sufficient, the more I depend upon Him for aid, the more humbly I walk with Him: my adoration of Him is animated, my presumption and self-confidence are checked, my filial fear is awakened, my gratitude for undeserved favours becomes strong and ardent. I now see that every creature, in comparison with God, is "less than nothing and vanity:" the mysteries of redemption—of redemption from impotence, from sin and slavery—I now receive with redoubled thankfulness and exultation: now more than ever is the conviction strengthened, that a life of faith, hope, and love, a life of prayer, devotion, and diligence, is the only rational and wise life. Most true it is that barren subtleties are chilling to piety, but primary truths shine upon the heart like the glorious sun, and cherish the heavenly guest who dwells in it as in the temple of the living God.

§ 29. There are some quotations from the fathers brought forward by the Bishop, in order to put Calvinism out of countenance, respecting *grace and Divine agency*, which, when fairly examined, are very friendly to our cause. His Lordship thought (else why should he produce it?) that the following insulated passage out of Irenæus is calculated to refute us:—"'He hath made manifest that *we ought* with our calling to be adorned also with the *works of justice*, that the Spirit of God may rest upon us.'"* Now this we consider as a sound, plain, practical truth. If we neglect to "do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God," what right have we to expect that the Spirit of God will rest upon us? Again, his Lordship might suppose the following passage from Hilary a victorious one against us:—"'But perhaps some one, through this religious modesty of the prophet, will dare to say thus impiously: If, says he, all things are from God, then human *igno-*

* Refutation, p. 303.

rance is free from blame, because it can obtain nothing but what it receives, as given by God. And, in the first place, this is an *impious sentiment*, that a person should think he *does not obtain* those things which belong to believers, *because he is not indulged with them by God.* But the prophet has removed all occasion of this impious excuse. For, first, when a person *prays* he has performed a *duty* suitable to his weakness; then he has connected the exertions of human devotion with the gifts of God. For when he says, "Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes," he shews, by the humility of his prayer, what belongs to God. But when he subjoined, "and I shall keep it unto the end," he declared the *duty* of his devotion. And in other things, also, he has bound both together by a mutual connexion, when he requested to be led into the path, and when he himself wished for it. For he placed with honour those things first which are from God, and then he added those things which are of man, with a confession of humility and *duty.* He prays, therefore, God to give. The *beginning*, therefore, [in point of *duty*,] is from *ourselves*, when we *pray* that the gift may be from Him: then, because it is His gift *in consequence* of our *beginning*, [as an act of duty,] it is *again* our act that it is sought, and obtained, and that it continues.'"*

§ 30. These remarks of Hilary's discover much good sense, as directed against a supine and impious objector. It was a doctrine well known and acknowledged in his day, that grace was sovereign, or at God's peculiar disposal; hence the objection; and the answer is not only ingenious but solid, when taken in the sense intended. The substance of it is clearly this, that no one has a right to complain of partiality in the Divine distribution of grace, or to expect any bestowment of it, while he neglects a plain duty. This, on our part, is the "beginning;" here lies the order of obligation; and to deny it, as the objector did, is "impious." Has he a right to complain, or has he any ground of excuse, who will not begin to act the part of duty, because he is not first indulged with special favours? The supposition is a virtual denial of the whole system of moral obligation. It is with arguments similar to those of Hilary that Calvinists reply to impious cavillers. "Duty is ours," and especially the duty of prayer, but the gracious answer is from the Lord. "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you."

* Refutation, p. 360.

He that "restraineth prayer before God," forsaketh his own profit, and foregoes all rational expectation of blessings from Him at whose disposal they are. But though we are bound in duty to begin, God is under no obligation. He can "begin" when He pleases, in conferring favours, without soliciting our permission. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." It is our duty undoubtedly to begin choosing Him; but He has the prerogative of a sovereign Benefactor to choose whom and when He pleases; and to bestow favours at a time and in a degree directed by unerring wisdom.

§ 31. The foregoing sentiment is further explained by the same author:—"'Human weakness is incompetent to obtain anything of itself; and this only is *the duty of its nature*, that it should be *willing to begin* to form itself unto the family of God. It belongs to the mercy of God to assist those who are willing, to confirm those who begin, to receive those who come. But the *beginning* [in point of obligation] is from ourselves, that He may perfect it.'" * The point in question with Hilary was, What is "the duty of our nature?" Is it to neglect, to delay, to stand cavilling with our Maker, our Benefactor, our equitable Ruler, and final Judge? or to *begin* to seek His favour in the discharge of incumbent duty? In similar circumstances, the Calvinists would answer as he did. It would be easy to multiply passages to the same import, were it necessary; but these may be sufficient, as fair specimens, to shew the real meaning of the authors when they speak, in some connexions, of the "beginning" being from "ourselves," and which his Lordship too hastily supposed to be adverse to our sentiments. Allowing that a Calvinist might sometimes say, God begins, and we follow; or, the true Christian works *from* life received; still there is no *real* inconsistency, because they do not mean the same kind of beginning. Besides, the modes of expression are directed against opposite erroneous extremes. The fathers opposed the grossest *fatalism* among the philosophers and heretics; and the Calvinists have had but too much reason to check another heretical pravity, sprung from the Pelagian school, which exalts human self-sufficiency to the throne of the Most High.

§ 32. Some quotations are adduced by the Bishop respecting *faith* which have a verbal aspect of opposition; but nothing more. Thus, for example, Irenæus:—"'God has preserved to man

* Refutation, p. 362.

a will *free*, and *in his own power*, not only in works, but also in *faith*, saying, "According to your faith, be it unto you;" shewing that *the faith of man is his own*, because he has his own will. And again, "All things are possible to him that believeth;" and, "Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee." And all such expressions shew that *man is in his own power* with respect to faith. And on this account, "he who believeth in Him hath eternal life: but he who doth not believe the Son, hath not eternal life, but the wrath of God shall remain upon him." In the same manner, God both shewing His own goodness, and *signifying that man is in his own free-will and power*, (sui arbitrii, ac suæ potestatis nominem significans,) said to Jerusalem, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not! wherefore your house shall be left desolate.'"* Here Irenæus is professedly opposing those heretics who pleaded for a fatal necessity and force, to the exclusion of judgment and will. They held that some are good and others evil, from *this kind* of necessity, while their own election or choice was out of the question. The father, therefore, very properly, asserts that man is a free agent, even in the exercise of faith. On this, his annotator justly observes that *faith* is taken by divines in a twofold sense; for it may be considered as either acquired by hearing the word of God, or as an infused principle.† To argue, therefore, from the one acceptation to the other is not conclusive. When we maintain that faith is the gift of God, we do not deny, but firmly hold, that man, as a free agent, is bound in duty to "believe with the heart unto righteousness."

§ 33. In the same manner we accord with these expressions of Cyril:—"'Those, therefore, who receive this spiritual and saving seal *have need also of their own free choice;* for as a writing pen, or a weapon, has need of one to act with it, so *grace also has need of those who believe.*'"‡ In short, what we maintain, in exact conformity with Cyril, is this, that faith as an infused habit is

* Refutation, p. 307.

† "Fidem duplicem constituunt Theologi, priorem quæ electione vel auditione verbi Dei acquiritur, hinc *acquisitam* vocant. Hanc Cyrillus Ierosol. *dogmaticam*, Apostolus fidem *ex auditu* nominat. . . . . Posteriorem fidem quòd a Deo penitus infundatur mentibus nostris, *infusam* appellant. Hanc donum Dei esse, compluribus scriptis ostendunt Augustinus et Cyrillus."—*Irenæi Opera*, p. 419, Ed. 1639.

‡ Refutation, p. 348.

entirely from God, and His free gift; but as an exercised grace, is our own free choice. So that, in the latter acceptation, "*grace* also has need of those who *believe;*" for how can any one become a *believer* without his own will embracing the Divine record or testimony?

§ 34. To the same purport are the following words of Chrysostom:—"'But perhaps some one will say, If everything which the Father gives comes to you, and to those whom He shall draw, and no one can come to you, unless it be given him from above, they are *free from all blame and accusation* to whom the Father does not give it. This is a mere fallacy and pretence. For *we have need of our own free-will.* For *to be taught,* and *to believe,* depend upon our own will. But by the expression, "that which the Father giveth me," He only means, that *to believe* in me is no common thing, but requiring revelation from above, and *a mind which piously receives that revelation.*'"* The very connexion shews that Chrysostom combats the fallacious pretence of those who would fain excuse themselves from the exercise of faith, because the orthodox maintained, as we do, that, in one sense, faith is the gift of God. If we would *believe,* we must hear the word, and be willing to be taught; and if we would "believe to the saving of the soul," it behoves us to cultivate "a mind which piously receives that revelation" which God has graciously afforded us.

§ 35. The Bishop of Lincoln seems to regard the following quotation from Gregory of Nazianzen, as a formidable contrast to our sentiments on *regeneration;* but we cannot allow that the real meaning of the passage is any other than what we acknowledge to be scriptural, though the mere phraseology may be considered as ambiguous:—"'This is the grace [the exhibited favour] and power [*i.e., obligation*] of baptism; not bringing a deluge upon the world, [*i.e.,* this is not its *design,*] as formerly, but purifying every one from his sins, and entirely removing the obstructions or spots which are caused by wickedness. [This is what it sacramentally *exhibits,* and this is the *obligation* under which it lays us.] To speak in few words, we are to consider the power [*i.e.,* the *obliging* force] of baptism as a contract with God for a second [*i.e.,* a holy] life, and a more pure conversation; *there being no second regeneration.*'"† It seems to me plain, that Gregory

* Refutation, pp. 194, 195. † Ibid., p. 374.

does not treat of baptism as the mere act of washing, or of any effect of it *ex opere operato*, but of what it sacramentally exhibits, and what is the obligation resulting from it; baptized Christians being considered by him, by virtue of "a contract with God," as under an explicit obligation to live a life becoming their profession, "and a more pure conversation" than they were before accustomed to. And as to the concluding clause, "there being no second regeneration," we admit it as a truth, whether the term "regeneration" be taken for the sign, or for the thing signified; that is, for baptism, or for a spiritual renovation: as there is no divinely-instituted repetition of the sign, so neither is there a second birth of the Holy Spirit; there being in the appointment of God but "one baptism," either sacramentally or spiritually considered. At the same time we profess, that millions besides Simon Magus *may* have been baptized with water, without being baptized with the Holy Spirit; and, consequently, that baptismal regeneration and spiritual regeneration ought not to be confounded. For my own part, I would not be solicitous about the *term* "regeneration," provided the idea or scriptural truth which we mean to express by it be allowed. We are not so fond of controversy as to contend about verbal minutiæ—to keep up "a strife of words."

§ 36. Closely related to the last quotation is the following from Justin Martyr, with which, if it be taken as it was evidently intended by this father, we fully accord; the difference is merely verbal:—"'Whoever are persuaded and believe, that those things which are taught and said by us are true, and engage that they can live agreeably to them, are directed to fast and pray, and entreat from God forgiveness of their former sins, we praying and fasting with them. Afterwards they are conducted by us to a place where there is water, and *they are regenerated*, [*i.e.*, baptized with water, which is the sacramental sign of a *new birth* unto righteousness,] according to the same mode of regeneration [baptism] by which we ourselves were regenerated, [baptized,] for they are then washed with water in the name of the Father of the universe and the Lord God, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost. For Christ said, "Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.'"* On this passage his Lordship remarks, that it "decidedly proves what was the *doctrine* of regeneration in the primitive Church of Christ." With

* Refutation, p. 297.

due deference to his Lordship, I must also remark upon it, that this passage only proves how Justin used the *term* "regeneration" in this connexion, but not the doctrine. It is indeed agreeable to our Lord's words, that without baptism there is no entering into His kingdom, the Church; and it is equally true, that no one shall enter into the spirituality of that kingdom without being "born of the Spirit."

§ 37. It is worthy of remark that Justin does not confine the term "regeneration," or being "born again," to the ordinance of baptism. In his dialogue with Trypho the Jew, he observes:—"Jesus commanded us to love even our enemies; which Isaiah also declared in many words, (*ἐν οἷς καὶ τὸ μυστηριον πάλιν τῆς γενεσεως,*) in which [words of Isaiah] is the mystery of our *regeneration*, and in like manner [the regeneration] of all those who expected Christ's appearance in the [celestial] Jerusalem, and who had laboured to please Him by their works."* The words to which he alludes are in Isa. lvi. 5–11. Neither in Isaiah nor in Justin is there any allusion to baptism, but a totally different kind of regeneration, even a spiritual renovation; a regeneration of which they were partakers who had gone to heaven, from age to age, prior to Christ's ascension.

§ 38. There is one passage in Jerome which, at first sight, seems to militate against our view of *election*, but in truth, when properly understood, accords with our sentiments:—"'Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, *according to the faith* of God's *elect;*' that is, of those who are not only called, but elected. There is also a great difference in the elect themselves, *according to the variety of works*, sentiments, and words. Nor does it follow that the elect of God either *possesses faith according* [in equal proportion] *to election*, or has the *knowledge of truth according to* [proportioned to the reality of] *faith*. Whence our Saviour said to the Jews *who had believed* in Him, "If ye continue in my word, ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." The evangelist testifies that He spoke these things to *those who did believe*, but *who did not know* the truth, which they would have in their power to obtain if they would remain in His word, and being made free, they would cease to be slaves.'"† The whole drift of this passage clearly shews, that what Jerome intended to assert was simply this, that among God's elect there are different degrees of

* Justini Opera, p. 312. Ed. 1686. † Refutation, p. 407.

faith, and among believers there are different degrees of knowledge. Is there any Calvinist to be found who would dispute this?

§ 39. I am unwilling to prosecute this exposure of his Lordship's misconceptions further, lest my readers should begin to complain of weariness. At the same time, they must bear in mind that the catalogue is by no means complete. It would be easy, indeed, to produce several scores of pages out of those very quotations which the Bishop has triumphantly brought forward as "opposed to the tenets of Calvinism," which, if fairly examined, have no real opposition to our sentiments, and which derive even the semblance of opposition from a peculiarity of expressions and phrases familiar to them, but seldom used by us,—expressions and phrases which may be very generally accounted for by a careful consideration either of the prevailing errors of their day, which they laboured to subvert, or of the truths which they were solicitous to establish.

Section IV.

Quotations from the Fathers that are Unscriptural both in Language and Sentiment.

§ 1. Remarks on the Christian fathers as *teachers*. § 2. Quotations respecting man as the *cause* and preserver of his own *goodness*, from Irenæus. § 3. From Origen. § 4. From Athanasius. § 5, 6. From Chrysostom. § 7. From Clement of Alexandria. § 8. On the cause of *difference* and variety in creatures, from Origen. § 9. On free-will *ceasing* with this life, from Hilary. § 10. On *redemption*, from Hilary. § 11. On the *permission* of *good*, from Jerome. § 12–14. On God being *good* not of *necessity*, from Jerome. § 15. On free-will being *weakened* by grace, from Jerome. § 16, 17. On no one being *born without Christ*, from Jerome. § 18, 19. On a *middle* life and a *middle sentence*, from Jerome. § 20–25. On the doctrine of *election*, from Jerome. § 26–28. On *baptism* conferring *grace*, from Chrysostom. § 29. On graces *given* having no crowns, from Chrysostom. § 30–33. On grace *not preventing* our choice, from Chrysostom and Theodoret.

§ 1. The Christian fathers did not propose themselves to the Church of Christ as infallible teachers; in this respect they occupied the same rank with Christian ministers in subsequent ages, those of the present day not excepted. They professed only to explain the sacred oracles, and their explanations have no claim of exemption from being brought to the test of liberal criticism and sound principles. There was a time, indeed, when the *ipse dixit* of a canonised father in the Church went as far in deciding a point of controversy as an appeal to any sentence of the Stagyrite went to set at rest a knotty point of debate in the Aristotelian school. But by consistent Protestants those days are viewed with an eye of pity, as days of darkness and superstition. What is truly scriptural, devotional, and rational, we should thankfully receive and improve; but what we may find in them of an opposite character is by no means to be imposed upon us under the patronage of sainted or pompous titles, or by the *argumentum ad verecundiam*. Many of them were learned and pious, faithful and zealous; and these are our helpers, though not our masters. But many of them (and occasionally the very best) were fanciful rather than judicious interpreters of Scripture; and in such instances, therefore, are not our guides to truth, but

are rather beacons to warn us of our danger. To examine their defects is not a pleasant task; but the Bishop of Lincoln, by giving them so much publicity, has rendered some notice of them unavoidable in a professed examination of his work.

§ 2. Some of these fathers, after the most ample allowance made for their circumstances, speak of man as the *cause of his own goodness and preservation*, in an unjustifiable strain. Thus, for example, Irenæus:—"'But man, being endowed with reason, and in this respect like to God, being made free in his will, and having power over himself, *is himself the cause* that sometimes he becomes *wheat*, and sometimes *chaff*.'"* It may be said, he contended against heretical fatalists, who ascribed to every one a fixed and unchangeable nature. Very true; but this is like opposing one heresy by advancing another. Man, indeed, has free-will, and "is himself the cause" of the *sinfulness* of his actions, whereby he becomes "chaff." But it is not true that, in like manner, he "is himself the cause" of the *goodness* of his actions, whereby he becomes "wheat." The error consists in ascribing opposite effects to the same cause; and in confounding free-will with the proper cause of moral good or evil. If he meant to convey this idea, that our good and bad actions may be traced to free-will, we grant it; but we cannot admit this as the ultimate "cause" of either, much less of good actions. We allow further, that the *immediate* cause of our actions, whether good or bad, is *in* ourselves, as either an efficient or a deficient principle; but then this is very different from saying that man "is himself the *cause* of his becoming wheat." The great fallacy consists in making man *as much* the cause of his good as of his evil; while the Holy Scriptures very explicitly ascribe all our good to God, and all our evil to ourselves.† The same error is involved in the following sentence, by the same author:—"'But he has placed the power of choice in man, as also in angels, (for angels are endowed with reason,) that those who should obey might justly possess *good, given* indeed by God, but *preserved* by themselves.'"‡ We think, with the Scriptures of truth, that God is our preserver; and that we are "preserved" or "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." The Lord is our keeper, our shepherd, our strong tower. If it had been said, it is

* Refutation, p. 302.

† See James i. 14-18; 2 Cor. iv. 6; and 1 Cor. iv. 7.

‡ Refutation, p. 304.

our *duty* to preserve ourselves from the defilements of sin, to keep ourselves unspotted from the world, and in the love of God, it might be received as a scriptural truth. This, however, is widely different from asserting that the good received by men is "preserved by themselves."

§ 3. It appears to me that the following sentence in Origen is not unexceptionable:—"'But because these vessels of which we speak are to be considered as rational, and endowed with free-will, every one is made a vessel of honour, or a vessel of dishonour, not by accident or chance; but *he who makes himself such that he deserves to be chosen*, is made a chosen vessel or a vessel of honour.'"* The author's design, I acknowledge, is to rouse the indolent sensualist, lurking under the covert of fatalism; but it seems to me that no design or occasion whatever can justify this mode of expression, "he who *makes himself* such that he deserves to be chosen." It appears equally offensive to Christian humility and philosophic truth. How contrary in language and sentiment from the strong affirmation implied in St Paul's interrogations: "Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?"† Do not these questions clearly imply, that God makes one to differ from another in what is good and valuable; and that no one has any excellence but from Him? But on the statement of *Origen*, a Christian may say, "I made *myself* to differ, I distinguished *myself* from all the undeserving ones." What though your will was active in worthy deeds, was it not the Spirit of God who gave you both the will itself and its goodness? "Be not high-minded." "Quench not the Spirit." Give unto God what belongs to Him: "Will a man rob God?"

§ 4. Equally reprehensible, because unscriptural, is the following assertion of Athanasius:—"'For the knowledge and accurate comprehension of the way of truth, *we have need of nothing but ourselves.*'"‡ How different from the language, and how opposite to the meaning of an inspired apostle is this:—"Not that we are *sufficient of ourselves* to think anything *as of ourselves;* but our sufficiency is *of God.*"§ "But by the *grace of God* I am what I am; and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the *grace of God* which was with me."‖ Had Paul been asked, Have

* Refutation, p. 339. † 1 Cor. iv. 7. ‡ Refutation, p. 344.
§ 2 Cor. iii. 5. ‖ 1 Cor. xv. 10.

you "need of nothing but yourself?" would he not have contradicted Athanasius in his presumptuous assertion? Had he been asked, How came you to obtain "the knowledge and accurate comprehension of the way of truth?" would he not have replied, "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ?"* While the Church of Rome blindly followed the sayings of the fathers, it is no wonder, considering the selfish propensities of our depraved hearts, that they should err so widely from the truth, and blunder on the doctrine of human merit.

§ 5. Of the same selfish and censurable tendency is the following remark of Chrysostom:—"'And the very circumstance that this patriarch, [Abraham,] who lived *before the time of grace*, and before the law, reached such a measure of virtue *by himself*, and *from his natural knowledge*, is sufficient to deprive us of all excuse. But perhaps some one will say, this man enjoyed great favour from God, and that the God of the universe shewed great regard for him. This I acknowledge; but unless he had first shewn things *from himself*, he would not have enjoyed things from God.'"† What is this but the Popish doctrine of merit in its most exceptionable form? This eloquent father evidently confounds things that differ. He supposed that Abraham, because he lived "before the time of grace," that is, the time of the gospel, had not gospel promises, and was destitute of internal grace, and that his virtue was "from his natural knowledge." Now this is clearly contradicted by the whole strain of Scripture:—"What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God."‡ He had to glory before men, that his faith was operative; and his acts of faith and obedience were justified and highly approved of God: the *act* of believing was his own, but the principle of faith was of God's gracious operation. And his knowledge was not "natural," but gracious; not less so than that of Paul, or any other Christian *after* "the time of grace." Internal religion is derived from the same Divine source at all times; and the difference, as to "grace," in the manifestative use of the term which he employs, is only in degrees, not in kind.

* 2 Cor. iv. 6. † Refutation, p. 464. ‡ Rom. iv. 1, 2.

§ 6. There are other passages in the same writer that must sound very gratingly in the ears of those who properly know themselves:—"'For if He be not a respecter of persons, as He certainly is not, but, looking to the intention, co-operates with us in our right actions, it is evident that *we are ourselves the cause of our obtaining His favour.*'"* This is no less false reasoning than false divinity. The conclusion is illogical, that, unless "we are ourselves the cause of our obtaining His favour," God must be "a respecter of persons." For what is the proper and scriptural notion of God acting as a respecter of persons? Is it not to shew partiality to one rather than another in His *judicial* character? But this He does not; for He will judge every one according as his work shall have been. On the supposition that He is bound as a sovereign *benefactor* to shew compassion and kindness, only according as we do things worthy of them, who could be saved? This father, therefore, confounds these characters of God and the true state of mankind,—confounds human *ability* with human *obligation*,—what a man actually does with what he ought to do. Even supposing man to perform what he ought, in order to obtain any Divine favour proposed to him, still it is a sentiment replete with self-ignorance, ingratitude, and corrupt theology, to ascribe this to *himself* as the "cause" of obtaining it.

§ 7. Not less unjustifiable is the following declaration of Clement of Alexandria:—"'It is in your power, if you will, to *purchase* this precious salvation with your *own treasure*, charity and faith, which is the *just price of life*. This price God willingly accepts.'"† Because God *requires* "charity and faith" in order to salvation, is it not to the last degree preposterous to call this "our own treasure," with which we "purchase this precious salvation?" Some allowance may be made for a rhetorical mode of speaking; but rhetoric is ill employed when it is made to trample on theological truth. It would be difficult to find anything among the most injudicious declaimers of the present day, however illiterate, of a tendency more injurious to Divine truth, or more dangerous to the souls of men, than this passage and the preceding quotations. To produce expressions and sentiments like these, as the genuine divinity of the ancient fathers, with a view to "refute" Calvinism, is nothing but to sink their reputation, and to destroy their influence in the public esteem.

* Refutation, p. 499. † Ibid., p. 311.

§ 8. Nearly related to the last quotations is the following passage out of Origen:—"'The *cause of the difference and variety in every individual creature* is shewn to *arise from their own motions* being more ardent or more slow toward virtue or toward wickedness, and not from the *inequality of Him who dispenses.*'"* This father has been often, and very justly, charged with corrupting Christianity by philosophy. But had his philosophy been good, he would not have corrupted, but illustrated, that religion which is founded in the highest wisdom, and which emanates from eternal truth. It is a philosophy or a science "falsely so called" that corrupts Christianity; and we may truly retort upon Origen the counterpart of what has been said of him—that by religion, imperfectly understood in many points, he corrupted philosophy. Let us hear the language of St Paul regarding "the cause of the difference and variety" among some rational creatures:—"Now there are *diversities of gifts*, but the same Spirit. And there are *differences of administrations*, but the same Lord. And there are *diversities of operations*, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. . . . . For to *one* is given by the Spirit the word of *wisdom;* to another the word of *knowledge* by the same Spirit; to *another* faith by the same Spirit; to *another* the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to *another* the working of miracles; to *another* prophecy; to *another* discerning of spirits; to *another* divers kinds of tongues; to *another* the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, *dividing to every one severally as he will.*"† How different is this doctrine from Origen's false philosophy, that there is "no inequality of Him who dispenses," and that "the *cause* of the difference and variety in every individual creature *arises from their own motions!*" Though his assertion is universal, "every individual *creature,*" and therefore philosophically absurd, I will admit that he means "every *rational* creature;" and still the theology of the sentiment is both antiscriptural and in a high degree unreasonable. "Who *made thee to differ* from another" for the better? Does it "*arise* from thy own motion, as more ardent toward virtue?" In human characters, doubtless, there are differences and varieties; and some are more ardent, others more slow: but what is their *cause?* Origen's answer, as above, can satisfy neither the scriptural divine nor the sound philosopher.

* Refutation, p. 322. † 1 Cor. xii. 4–11.

§ 9. Another absurd sentiment we find among these quotations is, that *free-will ceases with this life.* Thus Hilary:—"'For when we depart out of this life, we depart at the same time *from the right of will.* For when the *liberty of the will ceases,* the *effect* also of the will, *if there be any,* will *cease.*'"* I am willing to make every allowance that real candour can demand; and will suppose, therefore, that Hilary intended to convey the sentiment of *probation* being confined to this life. Even then, however, the statement is crude, and calculated to make false impressions on the mind. But if he meant what his words naturally express, the notion is alike unscriptural and absurd. Are not the celestial inhabitants free and voluntary agents? "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, ... heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."† If these services in heaven are not voluntary, not the effects of free-will, it will be rather difficult to prove, I imagine, that there are any on earth of that description.

§ 10. Among these quotations we also learn that *all mankind are redeemed from all their iniquities.* Thus the last-mentioned author:—"'He is good in whom we hope; and hope is to be placed in Him, because He is merciful, because there is abundant redemption with Him; for He redeemed *all mankind from all their iniquities.*'"‡ This is to extend the notion of universal redemption far beyond that of the advocates for universal restoration! "Redemit ab omnibus iniquitatibus suis universos!" Surely this is a circle to which his Lordship's ideas of redemption, however universal, cannot expand themselves. Had Hilary said that the *price* of redemption is adequate for all mankind, we could listen to him; but what scriptural sentiment, what principle of common reason, or what view of human society, can justify the representation as here quoted? What truth can be more certain, even to ocular demonstration, than the reverse of Hilary's assertion, that all mankind are *not* redeemed from all their iniquities; and that, on the contrary, a large proportion of mankind are willing captives to them?

§ 11. In these extracts from the fathers we are told, that *God is not the cause, but the permitter of good.* Thus Jerome teaches:

* Refutation, p. 358. † Rev. v. 13. ‡ Refutation, p. 363.

—" 'Whether, therefore, *with respect to good* or evil, *neither God* nor the devil is the *cause* of it, because our persuasion cometh not of Him that calleth, but from *ourselves*, who either consent, or do not consent, to Him that calleth. . . . He himself *permitted* us to will that which is good.'" * It would, indeed, have been a great hardship imposed upon any creature, when inclined "to will that which is good," not to have been "permitted" to do so. But what exalted views of self-sufficiency, and what degrading views of Divine operations, does this representation exhibit! One might be induced to think, from Jerome's language, that "to will that which is good" is a matter of course, if only "permitted." Jerome was not destitute of learning or genius, but he was lamentably deficient in just principles; on which account it is that he and many of the fathers are so often confused, erroneous, and self-contradictory. The permission of evil conveys an idea very conceivable, but the permission of good, from the Fountain and Author of all good, is an idea which has no archetype in the nature of things.

§ 12. The same author informs us that *God is good*, but *not of necessity*:—" 'For if God *be good* voluntarily, and *not of necessity*, He ought in making man to make him after His own image and likeness; that is, so that he too might *be good* voluntarily, and *not of necessity*. If he had been made such as to *do good* not by will, but by necessity, he would not have been like God, *who is therefore good because He wills it*, not because He is forced. But when they say that he ought to be made such that he *could not admit of wickedness*, while they impose upon him the necessity of good, they desire that he should *not be like God*.'" † The reader might very justly be surprised that a Christian Bishop in the nineteenth century, surrounded with so many improvements in science, should admit into a controversial publication such trash as this, under the specious title of "Quotations from the Fathers, opposed to the tenets of Calvinism." It is no wonder that heresies sprang up so plentifully amidst attempts like these to vindicate the catholic doctrine,—attempts which could have no other effect than to infuse additional strength into the arm of the assailant, and to render his heart impenetrable to the truth.

§ 13. In the first place, Jerome takes it for granted, in defiance of the strongest evidence, that "*voluntary*" and "*necessary*" cannot co-exist in God. But is it not a first principle of truth

* Refutation, pp. 404–407. † Ibid., p. 408.

that the existence of God is of eternal and absolute necessity? and is it not equally true that His will or *voluntariness* to exist is inseparable from His existence? Again, is not goodness an essential perfection of Deity, and therefore "necessary?" yet is it clearly impossible for the Divine goodness not to be voluntary. In the second place, to suppose that God is "good *because* He wills it," is to make an essential perfection the effect of will, which is not less absurd than to suppose that His existence is the effect of His will! If it be said that Jerome intended that the communication of good *ad extra* was voluntary, and not necessary; I reply, that in that case his account involves two improprieties. The first of these is a most inexcusable confounding of terms, the confounding of *being* good and *doing* good. When the Psalmist says, "Thou art good, and doest good,"* he expresses very different ideas. And when he says, "Good and upright is the Lord," † he conveys a very different sentiment from another expressed in these words, "Truly God is good *to Israel.*" ‡ The other part of the impropriety affects his argument, which is founded on a similarity of "good" in God and in man; whereas what God claims for man as the ground of likeness is "doing good," or virtuous conduct, and not the communication of his goodness to others. And if the author meant by "being good" the same thing as "doing good" voluntarily, and not of necessity, is not such language adapted to perplex rather than convince, to betray a cause rather than defend it?

§ 14. In the next place, Jerome supposes, most preposterously, that man would "not be like God," if he were so made that "he could not admit of wickedness," that is, of doing evil! But is not this one essential thing wherein it is absolutely impossible for God to be like man? Man goeth astray speaking lies; but "it is *impossible* for God to lie." It is God's glory that "He cannot deny Himself." It is as impossible for God to do wrong, or anything but what is good, as it is for Him to change His infinitely perfect holy nature. If it be objected that God could, if He pleased, do what is morally evil, but He will not, we are entitled to ask what evidence there is for saying that "He will not?" It will certainly never satisfy any one capable of a moment's reflection to be told that He never *has* done wrong, or that He declares in His Word that He never *will* do so. On the other hand, in God's indefectible nature, or His absolutely invariable perfections of rectitude and holiness,

* Ps. cxix. 68. † Ps. xxv. 8. ‡ Ps. lxxiii. 1.

we have a solid basis of trust and confidence, of faith, hope, and love. But what then becomes of Jerome's argument against the heretics—that man must needs be free to wickedness, otherwise he would not be like God?

§ 15. This father advances another unfounded notion, that *free-will is weakened by grace.* "'But where there is *mercy and grace, free-will in part ceases;* which extends only so far that we will and desire, and assent to what we think right.'"* Here the province of free-will is professedly and not improperly drawn; it "extends *only so far* that we will and desire, and assent to what *we think right.*" But what conceivable tendency is there in "mercy and grace" to make free-will "cease in part?" Had Jerome properly understood, or duly considered, the nature of the will and its freedom, on the one hand, and of grace in its operations on the other, he never could have imagined that mercy and grace can have any influence to diminish, to weaken, or any way to counteract our "assent to what we think right." If a degree of grace in man makes his free-will cease in part, one might naturally conclude that the perfection of mercy and grace in God would make His free-will to cease entirely. But grace in man is of an enlightening as well as of a holy nature; how then can it interfere with our willing what we think right? He who properly considers the subject may perceive, that a graceless person is free to choose what he *thinks* right at the moment of choosing; and that a gracious person, in proportion as his gracious principle is operative, chooses not only what he thinks right, (which is essential to freedom,) but also what really *is* right; so that his thinking and the reality coincide. Jerome's doctrine is no less absurd than the supposition, where there is *light,* our freedom of movement in part ceases!

§ 16. We are again told by this grave authority that *no one is born without Christ.* Thus he states:—"'It is clear that all men have a natural knowledge of God, and that *no one is born* without Christ, and without having in himself *the seeds* of wisdom, and of justice, and of the other virtues.'"† Were a modern writer to express himself in this manner, he would be charged, and not unjustly, with mysticism, and perhaps with heretical enthusiasm; and with the utmost deference to the learned person who has adduced the passage, I would submit that antiquity has no prero-

* Refutation, p. 411. † Ibid., p. 412.

gative to change the nature of truth. The first clause of the sentence is sufficiently vague; but as it admits of a construction consistent with truth, I take no further notice of it. But what can the author mean by "no one is born without Christ?" Surely not that the Messiah's existence continues; nor probably that His mediation is co-existent with the births of all mankind. From the connexion, it should seem, he means that no one is born without some kind of interest in Christ. What kind of interest, however, can it be? Is there, in fact, any conceivable interest in Christ which is not founded in *union* to Him? Union by *faith* is out of the question; and His being united to our *nature* by His incarnation could be no more a ground of interest to infants than to adult profligates; the nature of each individual being alike included in the incarnation. He must, therefore, mean a *spiritual* union, in virtue of which every one born has an interest in Christ. But is there a particle of evidence for this opinion? Besides, allow it, and you prove too much even for his Lordship, because, in that case, every one would be justified before he was baptized; it being, is manifest from the whole tenor of the New Testament, that he who is thus united to Christ is in a *justified* state. "There is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." "He that hath the Son hath life."

§ 17. Again, what "seeds of wisdom, and of justice, and of the other virtues," without which "no one is born," can there conceivably exist in any human being, except as the effect of a vital, spiritual union? Nay, the notion abetted makes the second birth prior to the first, since, according to him, "no one is born without Christ;" or, at all events, the first and second births are coeval. Now, as it is contended by his Lordship that baptism is the new birth, I confess I do not perceive how he can honestly disown the fair inference, that "no one is born without baptism!" Moreover, as there is "no second regeneration," why should any adult persons be baptized, and why should Christ say, "Ye must be born again?" On this author's principle, it might have been replied, We were not born without Christ, we had from the first breath a new nature, "the seeds of wisdom, and of justice, and of the other virtues;" and if the design of baptism be to "confer" or to "convey" these blessings, it comes too late: and as our natural birth cannot be repeated, so neither can our spiritual birth. In brief, this father's notion must be considered as a groundless enthusias-

tic hypothesis, until it be made to appear that "no one is born without the indwelling Spirit of Christ;" and in proportion as any one succeeds in the attempt, consequences will follow not a little disastrous to his Lordship's doctrine of baptism and regeneration.

§ 18. The Bishop attacks Calvinism, by an insulated quotation from the same author, concerning a *middle life* and a *middle sentence*. As the modern Calvinists are so prone to run into extremes, possibly the insertion of the following passage was intended to counteract their eccentric propensities:—"'It is not to be feared but that there may be a certain *middle life* between virtue and sin, and that the sentence of the Judge may be *in the middle*, between reward and punishment.'"* Now as I am at a loss to know against what Calvinistic extremes this middle doctrine is intended to be operative, unfortunately I cannot profit by it. Let us, however, re-examine the passage; for it was neither written by Jerome, I presume, nor quoted by his Lordship, without some design. "It is not to be *feared;*" from this we may infer that it was intended by the author as a consolatory doctrine, and calculated to cheer a disconsolate parent on the loss of an infant child, especially if death seized it unbaptized. This, however, will not do; for the author believed, as we have seen, that "no one is born without Christ, and without the seeds of every virtue:" and clearly he who has the seeds of every virtue has a virtuous nature, and he who has Christ is free from sin and condemnation. This middle doctrine, therefore, cannot apply to new-born infants; nor is it to be supposed that the ascribed benefit is withdrawn until forfeited by some actual transgression, as this would turn the scales, and their life would no longer be a *medium* "between virtue and sin."

§ 19. We have sometimes heard it asserted by a certain class of preachers, that the virtues and charities of men are a *counterbalance* to their sins and failings: that, for instance, when the Scripture says "Thou art weighed in the balances," the meaning is, that thy sins are put in one scale, and thy virtues in the other. Now it may so happen that the weights are equal, without any preponderance one way or other. Who can tell but this may be the "middle life" intended by Jerome, which is to receive from the Judge a "middle sentence" between reward and punishment? But I am apprehensive that this also will not succeed. Because,

* Refutation, p. 415.

first, one unpardoned sin is a heavier weight than all the virtues of any man put together in the opposite scale: a conclusion which easily admits of formal proof, but for the truth of which I shall only appeal at present to the proper nature of sin and of human virtue. Again, if the man's transgressions are forgiven, or his sins covered, they are never likely to be put in the scale: what is blotted out is not to be produced; virtues and charities have the whole exclusive sway,—and what becomes of the middle life, and the middle sentence? If we appeal to Scripture, instead of human fancies ancient or modern, we may soon learn that there is no medium between being in Christ and out of Christ; between being justified as united to Him, or condemned as not united to Him; and that there will be no medium at the final judgment between "Come, ye blessed," and "Depart, ye cursed." If, indeed, there were any force in Jerome's doctrine against the Calvinists, it would go to establish the doctrine of purgatory, a *limbus infantium*, or a *limbus patrum*. The Papists must have felt extreme regret when they found that they could not prevail upon the Protestants to abide by an appeal to the fathers upon all disputed points.

§ 20. This author is not a little confused when he endeavours to ascertain the scriptural *doctrine of election*. Of this let the reader judge from the following specimen:—"'What then did God choose? For if He gives the Holy Spirit to whom He wills, through which love works good, how has He chosen to whom He gives it? For if it be given *in consequence of no merit, there is no election*, for *all are equal before merit;* nor can it be called election where things are exactly equal. But because the Holy Spirit is not given except to those who believe, God has not chosen the *works* which He himself gives when He gives the Holy Spirit, that we may do good works through love; but nevertheless He has chosen *faith*. Therefore God did not in His prescience choose the works of any one which He was Himself about to give, but He *chose faith in His prescience;* so that He chose him whom He foreknew would believe, to whom He might give His Holy Spirit, that by good works he might also obtain eternal life.'"* On this passage I would make a few remarks. And, *first*, if there be no election but in consequence of personal merit, (for no other is in question,) how came the apostle Paul to be "a chosen vessel," and arrested in his career of sin, before he had any such merit? Whereas, if we view

* Refutation, p. 424.

the Redeemer, on the ground of His own merit, acting the part of a surety, rescuing Paul from the power of sin and Satan, giving him light and life by the operation of His Spirit, whereby he is convinced of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and if, moreover, as the effect of this first grace, we view him full of agitation, crying out, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" then fervently praying from this principle of faith for more light and instruction; we behold a plain, consistent, scriptural, and rational process. And though the circumstances of this case are extraordinary, there is no reason to conclude that the nature of the Divine process as to causality is different from other conversions. But even were the case a solitary one in this respect, it is sufficient to overturn Jerome's maxim, "If the Spirit be given in consequence of no merit, [*i.e.*, in the object,] there is no election."

§ 21. I remark, *secondly*, that the ground of his argument, "for all are *equal* before *merit*," is fallacious for want of a distinction of the terms. We grant that "merit" is regarded in all election or choice, but what merit, or whose merit? The Scripture tells us that the elect are "chosen in Christ," and what can this import less than *for His sake*, or on the ground of His merits? He who has the Spirit of Christ has an interest in Him, in His merits, and in His federal righteousness, while he who "has not the Spirit of Christ is none of His." Hence the term "equal" ought to be distinguished. Two persons, one interested, and the other not interested in the merits of Christ by a spiritual union, are in this respect not equal; and, therefore, on Jerome's own maxim, "without merit there is no election," the one may be elected and not the other, without having recourse to *personal* merit by a subsequent act of believing. For, in the nature of things, the union and interest must precede a *living faith*. To suppose that a *dead faith* has *merit* to procure the Holy Spirit is surely an absurdity too gross to require a refutation.

§ 22. I remark, in the *third* place, that though in regard to "merit," or personal worthiness, the Calvinists consider all men "equal," it does not follow from our principles that God sees no ground of preference. His understanding is infinite, His wisdom is to us unfathomable. He adapts means to ends in a manner we are unable to scrutinise; and knows, with unerring precision, how to select out of the same *unmeritorious* lump, materials for vessels of more or of less honour. None are reserved to wrath, but for

their abuse of liberty, and the powers and means with which they were favoured; nor are any chosen in Christ without a *Divine* reason. He is the author of our natural powers, He supports and invigorates them, He preserves and protracts our lives, and fixes the bounds of our habitations. Taking all into the account, He knows how the choice of one rather than another is adapted to suit His plan of wisdom, and to display "the praise of the glory of His grace." But at the same time that distinguishing benevolence reigns in the distribution of benefits, He is infinitely remote from wronging any man, or doing the smallest injury to the work of His hands.

§ 23. In the *fourth* place, by what logic could Jerome infer that faith is meritorious, while good works are not meritorious? Because, it seems, God "Himself *gives works*, when He gives the Holy Spirit, that we may do good works through love." But how does it appear that "works" are the gift of God, while "faith" is not? The Scripture says, "By grace are ye saved through faith; and *that* [*καὶ τοῦτο, i.e., Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον*, nempe *τὸ credere*, vel *fides*] not of yourselves: it is *the gift of God:* . . . . for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus *unto good works*, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." * "For unto you *it is given* in the behalf of Christ, [*τὸ εἰς αὐτὸν πιστεύειν,*] *to believe on him.*" † How decisive the evidence that faith is no less "the gift of God" than good works! The actions, both believing and doing good, are alike ours, but the spiritual as well as natural ability to act is *from God*, who "worketh in us both to *will* and to *do* of His own good pleasure." Consequently, if it be a good reason that God does not choose works because He gives works, it follows, from revealed evidence, that He does not choose faith because He gives faith.

§ 24. "He chose *faith* in His prescience, so that he chose *him whom He foreknew would believe.*" Here is a difficulty. If a man must not have any influence of the Holy Spirit to enable him to believe, lest it should take away the merit of faith, how is he to acquire it, so that it may become a meritorious ground of his election? In the sight of God, and therefore in His prescience, a *dead* faith can have no *merit*, nor can it bring the Holy Spirit into the soul; it must then be a *lively* faith that is chosen. But whence comes this? For supposing, with Jerome, that "no one is born

* Eph. ii. 8, 10. † Phil. i. 29.

without Christ," or without "the seeds of faith;" and supposing, too, that baptism has conveyed to the subject something additional; it is more than probable that these "seeds" have lost their prolific virtue by an indolent, careless, carnal, or dissipated life. By his loose or profligate conduct, his baptism and his interest in Christ is lost. If ever he had a lively faith, these things have brought death upon it. And now it requires a resurrection. On this father's principle, here is a hopeless case. If the man be left to himself, where is the ground of hope? That he *ought* to believe is certain, because he has a plain testimony from God for that purpose; nay, more, that he ought to believe with all his heart, that he may obtain righteousness; but still the difficulty returns, how is he to do *this good work*, "believing with the heart," without being quickened from above? How perplexing the case! If he be assisted to believe, his *merit* is destroyed; and yet if he have no merit, he cannot be chosen! Though this learned father, however, leaves us in clouds and perplexities, and encircles us with contradictions, the inspired volume is clear and explicit on the point:—"And you hath *he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world. . . . . We are *his workmanship, created* in Christ Jesus unto good works." * "The new man is *created* in righteousness and true holiness." † "God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were *dead in sin*, hath quickened us together with Christ, (*ἡμᾶς . . . . συνεζωοποίησε τῷ Χριστῷ, vel ἐν Χριστῷ,*)—[that is, *we, Jews and Gentiles together*, He has caused to live spiritually by Christ,]—(by grace are ye saved.)" ‡ *Grace* is the alpha and omega of our salvation; and the mode of its administration is by effecting a vital union with Christ; which is the only security a fallen creature has for faith and good works. Hence the principle by which we believe is called "the faith *of the operation of God*."

§ 25. If God chooses faith on the foreknowledge of one and another believing previous to any quickening operation or energy, there was an infallible ground of that foreknowledge; because to know certainly beforehand what is in itself uncertain, is a bald contradiction. Thus, God foreknew with absolute certainty that Adam would transgress. His sinful posterity are in circumstances far less favourable for performing any spiritual act. Now I would

* Eph. ii. 1, 10. † Eph. iv. 24. ‡ Eph. ii. 4, 5.

ask any considerate person, is it easier for a sinner to believe with his heart in the Lord Jesus Christ, than it was for Adam to abstain from the forbidden fruit? And if he failed in circumstances so favourable to encounter every temptation, what conceivable ground of certainty is there that millions of sinful creatures will educe from themselves, *unaided by Divine operation*, a spiritual principle and an effectual exercise of faith in the Saviour? It is no wonder that the Romish Church is so fond of resorting to the protection of some favourite fathers, when they find them such valuable auxiliaries in upholding their doctrine of human merit; but that any Protestant divine should countenance their folly is in truth too much like the desertion of an Israelite to the camp of the Philistines.

§ 26. The Bishop of Lincoln contends that *baptism confers Divine grace*, and to confirm his opinion he appeals to the fathers. For my own part, I regard his Lordship to the full as good a patriarch as many of them, and could as readily take his word for a sentiment. I shall, therefore, presume to offer a remark or two on the following passage from Chrysostom:—"'For you also enjoyed Divine grace at your baptism, and were made partaker of the Spirit, although not so as to be able to perform miracles, but in a degree sufficient to secure a right and correct behaviour; so that the perverseness lies in your own negligence only.'"* In the first place, as this is a mere assertion without proof, as there is not even an attempt to produce evidence for it, what auditor or reader could rationally receive it as a fact? It is so far from being a self-evident truth, that it requires either decisive Scripture testimony or some cogent inferable argument in order to induce conviction. In the next place, every catechumen was supposed to enjoy Divine grace before he was baptized; otherwise, what concern had he with that sacred rite which requires of adults the believing with the heart? And who can conceive of a person possessed of Divine grace without being also a "partaker of the Spirit" of grace in His ordinary operations? If Chrysostom, therefore, only reminds baptized persons of what they enjoyed at their baptism, but not by their baptism, and that they were then partakers of the Spirit, but not as the consequence of that rite, on which point the minister and the faithful formed a charitable opinion, it forms no argument for the instrumentality of baptism in *conveying* these blessings.

* Refutation, p. 450.

§ 27. And, finally, if it be said that it was in the days of this father a doctrine acknowledged in the Church, and therefore did not require proof,—that the catechumens were taught to expect the blessings of grace and the Holy Spirit, at that time,—and possibly the baptized might be conscious of possessing these blessings by means of the ordinance; I beg leave to offer a few other observations. If this was a doctrine "acknowledged" in the Church at that time, we ask, On what ground was it so acknowledged? Was it on the ground of Scripture testimony? Let it be produced and fairly interpreted. Was it on the ground of apostolic tradition? Who is evidence for this, and what credit is due to his testimony? Even supposing the tradition did not pass through a corrupt channel, and assume new aspects from successive retailers, we still demand, Who has appointed apostolic tradition as a standard of doctrine in the Church? A rational inquirer after truth has no more to do with pretended traditions than he has with ecclesiastical councils. "To the law and to the testimony" the appeal should be made, respecting the enjoyment of Divine grace and participation of the Spirit.

§ 28. How the catechumens were "taught," and what they were taught to expect, is of no weight further than as their instructions were scriptural. While human nature is ever liable to err, and the best of men are imperfect, to substitute a question of fact (were it well established) for a question of right, or to substitute evidence for the one in the room of the other, is the direct road to a gulf of errors. The true question here is, not what the fathers or the Church *thought*, or what they taught, but what they *ought* to think and teach, according to the divinely-appointed standard of Christian doctrine and practice. What Church is there in the world, however corrupt, but *pretends* that its doctrines are founded either on the Scripture, or on apostolic tradition united to it? As to the supposition of the baptized being "conscious" of receiving grace and the Spirit as the immediate effect of baptism, it would come with a very ill grace from any who are for ever declaiming against modern enthusiasts. Ought they not rather to infer, that there were enthusiasts in ancient times, than adopt the supposition as an example worthy of imitation? I admit that a subject of real vital Christianity may be conscious of the *effects* of Divine operation in his own mind. He may be able to say from consciousness,

as one did on another occasion, "Whereas I was once blind I now see." "He that believeth has the *witness* in himself." "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." He has new apprehensions, new judgments, a new mode of drawing conclusions, a new method of regulating his thoughts, affections, and conduct; of all which he must be more or less "conscious" when he reflects. But why such effects should be supposed by the baptized to be produced by the baptismal rite I have yet to learn. Have these baptized individuals, or any in modern times, *testified* this? Or if they have, what credit is due to them? Suppose they say, that they have experienced peculiar delight, or were much animated in devotion and obedience after, immediately after, the ceremony of baptism, is this any legitimate evidence of this ordinance having *conveyed* to them Divine grace and the Holy Spirit? May not the same effect attend any other Divine ordinance, as preaching, the Holy Supper, or private devotion? In short, they who can imbibe the sentiment of Chrysostom in the passage quoted, need only be placed in favourable circumstances, in order to become as good enthusiasts as any of their neighbours; at least their principles will not retard the event.

§ 29. Chrysostom advances another sentiment which must not be overlooked; which is, that *graces given have no crowns*:—"'Such is the nature of graces *given*, that they have no crowns, no rewards. For a gift is not the *merit* of those who receive, but the *liberality* of him who gives.'" * So, then, infants who are not, according to Jerome, born without Christ, and who, according to Chrysostom, if baptized, have Divine grace and the Holy Spirit, must be cast into a *limbus infantium*, for they can have no crowns of happiness, nor the reward of a Saviour's merits in heaven, because they had not at death the merit of faith and good works to support them! A professor, indeed, who *pretends* that he is a child of grace, who "boasts of a false gift," and is as "a cloud without water," or a tree having leaves without good fruit, has just cause to tremble at the judgment which awaits him. But how improper, not to say absurd, to advance the above-quoted sentence as an oracular maxim! *Why* may not persons be crowned for what they *are*, as well as for what they have done? Surely he who has a renewed

* Refutation, p. 460.

spirit and a cleansed heart, though he has not had an opportunity of shewing his fruit of good works, is a proper subject of a crown of glory from God the righteous judge.

§ 30. Again; Chrysostom maintains that *grace does not prevent our choice*:—"'For neither God, nor the grace of the Spirit, *prevents* our choice; but it calls and waits, so that we go of our own accord and willingly: then after we have thus gone, it supplies all assistance from itself.'" * To the same purpose is a remark in Theodoret:—"'The God of the universe, as God, knows all things, at a distance; He does not, however, *necessitate* one man to practise virtue, and another to work wickedness. For if He himself forced to either, He could not justly applaud and crown the one, and decree punishment against the other.'" † "God does not *prevent* our choice,—does not *necessitate* any one." Here we recognise something more than rational liberty, even a supposed power in the will to determine itself; a sentiment which I have repeatedly had occasion to notice, as inconsistent with religion and the nature of things. It is observable how different were the sentiments of the compilers of the English Common Prayer, from that which is here avowed by Chrysostom. There we find, in "A Prayer for the Clergy and People," these words:—"*Send down* upon our Bishops and Curates, and all congregations committed to their charge, the healthful *Spirit of Thy grace;* and that they may truly please Thee, *pour upon them* the continual dew of Thy blessing." And in "The second Collect at Evening Prayer" we read, "O God, from whom *all holy desires*, all good counsels, and *all just works* do proceed," &c. Also, in "A Prayer for the King's Majesty:"—"And so replenish him with the *grace of Thy Holy Spirit, that he may alway incline to Thy will*, and walk in Thy way." In "A Prayer for the Royal Family," the minister and congregation supplicate, saying, "*Endue them* with Thy Holy Spirit; *enrich them* with Thy heavenly grace." And even in a prayer ascribed to Chrysostom himself, it is said, "Almighty God, who *hast given us grace* at this time with one accord to make our common supplications unto Thee." Surely he cannot mean to acknowledge merely the *outward favour* of assembling together, which was common to the pious and the profane, to the sincere and the hypocrite. He must rather intend *inward grace* which is given to those who are true Christians, and

* Refutation, p. 462. † Ibid., p. 506.

which, by charitable construction, was ascribed to the Church as an assembly of Christian people.

§ 31. As this point is of great moment, and is in a manner the very hinge on which his Lordship's controversy with the Calvinists turns, I shall produce a few more witnesses out of the formularies of the English Church, which ought to have no small weight with its true members. The 10th Article seems to have been drawn up on purpose to oppose the notion of Chrysostom and Theodoret held out in the passages above cited:—"We have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without *the grace of God* by Christ *preventing us, that we may have a good will,* and working with us, when we have that good will." In this Article we are taught, in the plainest manner, that the grace of God "*prevents* our choice," in direct opposition to Chrysostom's assertion. It represents the grace of God not only as "working with us when we have a good will," but also "prevents us, that we may have a good will." And this view of the Article immediately follows from the statement given of "Original or Birth-sin" in the 9th Article:—"Original Sin standeth not in the following of Adam, (as the *Pelagians* do vainly talk;) but it is the fault and corruption of the *nature of every man,* that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is *of his own nature inclined to evil,* so that the flesh *lusteth always contrary to the spirit.*" If this be the real state of *every man,* what prospect is there of his recovery without *preventing grace?* That man has not any claim upon God for this assistance, is apparent from the very notion of its being *grace;* and yet that man is bound in duty to seek this preventing grace, is evident from its being held forth to him as a matter of promise, which he may possess on terms prescribed. In these views there is no inconsistency; because our native corruption and impotence dissolve no obligation of dutiful compliance. The proper mode of considering the point, as a doctrine, is *à posteriori;* and the question to be decided is this: Admitting the fact that any man has a spiritual choice, to what is the goodness of that choice to be ascribed? Is it to preventing grace, or to a self-determining power in the will *prior* to such a grace? We conclude, and so does the English Church, that it is to be ascribed to grace.

§ 32. The words of Theodoret, that God "does not *necessitate* one man to practise virtue, and another to work wickedness," may be admitted in a compound sense, but not in a divided sense. God does not "necessitate" any man to "work wickedness." Nor is there any necessitating *force* upon the *will* to practise virtue. But his remark, as a universal proposition, is subversive of an important theological truth, taught in the Holy Scriptures, and by the Church of England, its Offices and Articles. Without some kind of necessitation, there can be no certainty, or no certain gracious effect; and yet this effect, as certain to follow, is everywhere implied in the Church-prayers. For instance, in the prayer which relates to "those that are to be admitted to holy orders," God is petitioned "to *guide* and *govern the minds* of His servants the Bishops and Pastors of His flock, *that they may* lay hands suddenly on no man, but *faithfully and wisely* make choice of fit persons to serve in the sacred ministry." And in the "Prayer for all Conditions of Men," this is one petition:—"More especially, we pray for the good estate of the Catholic Church; that it may be *so guided and governed by Thy good Spirit, that all* who profess and call themselves Christians *may be led* into the way of *truth, and hold the faith* in the unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life." Again, in the Collect for "the first Sunday in Advent," this petition is included:—"Almighty God, *give us grace that we may* cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light." It would be easy to fill many pages with extracts from the prayers, collects, &c., of the Established Church of the same tendency, in which "preventing grace" and a necessitating influence are clearly implied.

§ 33. Is it not clearly implied, that IF God is pleased to "guide and govern the minds of His servants," the certain effect will be their acting "faithfully and wisely?" And IF the Church catholic be "guided and governed by the good Spirit" of God in some *special manner*, the certain effect will be truth, faith, and righteousness. Should it be said, the implication is, that then they "may," if they please, act faithfully and wisely, &c., this would render the petitions both superfluous and unmeaning. For are not men always at liberty, if they please, to do everything that is right and praiseworthy? The design of asking for grace and the Holy Spirit is to secure the event, to make what we desire certain; and, consequently, that these Divine aids may prove in us a neces-

sitating cause of the event. If we have not such meaning in our prayers when we ask for grace and the Holy Spirit, what meaning can we have? Are they any better than vain repetitions of words without a meaning? When we pray, "Lord, have mercy upon us, and *incline our hearts* to keep this law," does it not imply that IF God be pleased to do this, we shall keep His law? When we supplicate the Almighty in these words, "Mortify and kill all vices in us; and *so strengthen us by Thy grace*, that by the *innocency* of our lives, and *constancy* of our faith even unto death, we may glorify Thy holy name," is it not implied that the certainty of the events depends on that grace which is desired? If any, from this doctrine of the Church and of the Holy Scriptures, wrongfully infer that if grace necessitates in any sense, nothing is left for man to do, they know not "what they say, nor whereof they affirm." They might urge, with equal propriety, because God necessitates our souls and faculties to exist, we have nothing to do with thinking, reasoning, fearing, or loving. Grace in the heart is a living principle, at the sovereign disposal of God; and the exercise of this principle, when obtained, is as much our duty as it is to consult the preservation of our lives and of our faculties. And as the existence of our lives and faculties necessitates thoughts and volitions of some kind; so Divine grace, existing as a principle in the soul, necessitates the goodness of our thoughts and volitions. But not so *exhibited* grace, as an object of *choice*, which will be received or rejected, improved or abused, according to the state of the mind. These important duties Chrysostom and Theodoret, and many others of the Christian fathers, perpetually confound.

§ 34. Though much more might have been said on the quotations from the fathers, whoever has done me the honour to accompany me through the whole of this chapter will probably think it too long. Considering, however, that his Lordship's chapter on this head is much longer, that many pay undue deference to these writers, and that few English authors have introduced them except as authorities, I thought it might be of some service to the Christian cause to examine their opinions more minutely than otherwise would have been needful. It would not be difficult to produce whole volumes of quotations from the ancient fathers upon the plan adopted in the "Refutation;" but to read, mark, and translate, without any arrangement of the subjects, would but little conduce, I apprehend, either to instruction or edification. By the

classification of their sentiments contained in this examination, the reader has a tolerable specimen of what might be expected in a larger collection on controverted subjects. Valuable and edifying extracts, indeed, might be made from their writings, digested under proper heads; but, for that purpose, the translation should be free, and their inconsistencies excluded. And even such a work, in proportion to the success of its accomplishment, might circulate too high an estimate of their general merit, and lead the injudicious to infer that they are really deserving of all that indiscriminate respect which the ages of superstition have been disposed to confer upon them.

CHAPTER VI.

AN INQUIRY INTO THE GROUNDS OF THE INCONSISTENCIES APPARENT IN THE BISHOP'S AVOWED SENTIMENTS, AND IN HIS QUOTATIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

SECTION I.

The misapplication of TERMS *which are equivocal in their meaning.*

§ 1. Inconsistencies in the "Refutation," from a misapplication of the terms *power, ability,* being *enabled,* &c. § 2, 3. Exemplified in his Lordship's account of Cain and Abel; and, § 4. In his account of the sin of Adam and the merits of Christ. § 5. The misapplication of *cause* for *occasion.* § 6. Of *salvation* for the *means* of salvation. § 7. Of being *elected* to *means,* for being elected to *happiness.* § 8. Inconsistencies arising from the misapplication of the terms *denial, preterition,* and *reprobation.* § 9. His Lordship's advocacy of reprobation. § 10. Calvinists disavow reprobation. § 11. Observations on equivocal and undefined terms in controversy.

§ 1. I THINK it has been fully shewn, in the preceding parts of this volume, that there are many inconsistencies in the Bishop's own avowed sentiments, as well as in the quotations he has produced from the fathers. A scheme of thoughts *may* be, at least in a considerable measure, consistent with itself, without being consistent with the true standard, God's revealed will; but when a systematic view of doctrines fails in self-consistency, it *must* be wrong in some of its parts. Such a failure may be owing to several causes; and, after an attentive examination of his Lordship's book, it appears to me that one of these causes is the misapplication of terms which are equivocal in their meaning. This appears in the frequent employment of the term *power, ability,* being *enabled,* &c. It being a plain case that without these, in *one* sense, man could not be the subject of Divine law, or be

responsible for his actions, though destitute of them in *another* sense, his Lordship often argues from the one to the other.

§ 2. When speaking of Cain and Abel, and God's address to the former, his Lordship says, "May we not hence infer, that the immediate sons of Adam lived under a Divine law, which they had the *power* of obeying and disobeying?"* They had no doubt a physical "power" a good rule, a merciful promise, and favourable opportunities; these were common to Cain and Abel; but had they *alike* that "power," which consists in "a good inclination," or "a good and honest heart?" If each had *this* "power," then is not "every man of his own nature inclined to evil," a point which his Lordship acknowledges. He allows, too, that "a sincere disposition to obey the Divine will was all that was necessary to *enable* a person to judge whether the doctrine preached by Christ was the invention of man or a revelation from God."† Consequently, the scribes, and Pharisees, and rulers, who rejected Christ's doctrine, notwithstanding they had "a practicable rule," a plain testimony, convincing miracles, and favourable opportunities "to obey the Divine will," were not "*enabled*" to obey it, even in his Lordship's own sense of the term.

§ 3. His Lordship asserts, that Cain had "the *power* of obeying," and yet he states, that "a man *cannot*, by his own natural faculties and *unassisted* exertions, so counteract and correct the imperfection and corruption derived from the fall of Adam, as to be *able* of himself to acquire that true and lively faith which would secure salvation."‡ What is become, then, of Cain's "power?" It is resolved into Divine assistance. But if he was divinely assisted, where is the evidence of the fact? And if Divine assistance does not secure "a *sincere disposition* to obey the Divine will," why should man *pray* for that assistance, as his Lordship recommends, *that he may be obedient?* If Cain *had* Divine assistance which "enabled" him to obey, and yet did not obey, of what use is it to pray for that which produces no effect? And if he had not effectual assistance, in what sense had he "power," or "was *enabled* to obey," except in *another* sense of power, which annihilates his Lordship's argument?

§ 4. Again, when speaking of the sin of Adam and the merits of Christ as co-extensive, his Lordship observes, "The force of the argument is destroyed, and the most acknowledged rules of lan-

* Refutation, p. 5. † Ibid., p. 20. ‡ Ibid., p. 53.

guage are violated, by so interpreting this passage as to contend that all men are liable to punishment on account of the sin of Adam, and that a few only are *enabled* to avoid that punishment through the death of Christ."* Here the word "enabled" is confounded with having objective or moral means of avoiding punishment through the death of Christ. Taking the word in this sense, which his argument requires, how could his Lordship consistently oppose even Calvin himself, who admitted that every man to whom the gospel is presented is "enabled," in this acceptation of the term, to avoid punishment through the death of Christ? His Lordship's quotation from the Reformer proves this:—"'God indeed affirms that He wills the conversion of all men; and He destines His exhortations in common to all: their efficacy, however, depends upon the Spirit of regeneration.'" † The means, as such, are sufficient, and such as becomes a moral governor to afford; but the *other* kind of ability, which consists in "a sincere disposition to obey," proceeds from the sovereign grace of God, whereby they are, properly speaking, "enabled" to obey.

§ 5. Sometimes the word *cause* is confounded with *occasion*, and an argument is drawn from the equivocal use of the first of these terms. Thus, for example, in the following passage:—"Can we then suppose that God sees His rational creatures not only in need, but obnoxious to death and misery, and yet *refuses His aid* to rescue them from impending ruin? The gospel, instead of being a proof of God's 'good-will towards men,' would rather shew His determination that they should add to their guilt, and increase their condemnation. Instead of *raising us* from a death in sin to a life of righteousness, it would be the inevitable *cause* of more heinous wickedness, and of sorer punishment, to the greater part of mankind."‡ His Lordship must allow, on the most indubitable evidence of plain facts, that the gospel does *not* raise from a death in sin to a life of righteousness "the greater part" even of those who read and hear it. With what consistency, then, can he say, that God "refuses His aid" to those who are not raised from a life of sin to a life of righteousness by its aid? If the gospel "would be the cause of more heinous wickedness, and a sorer punishment," *because* it does not so "raise" them, then, on his own principle, it *is* such a cause. But how can a proclamation of mercy be a "cause" of wickedness and punishment! Surely on no scheme

* Refutation, p. 190. † Ibid., p. 536. ‡ Ibid., p. 195.

can it be more than the *occasion* of these consequences. The gospel, like its Divine Author, is "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence" to the wicked; but to them who are well disposed, it is precious. To the one, it is "a savour of death unto death;" to the other, "a savour of life unto life." In short, in whatever sense we understand the word "cause" in his Lordship's argument, without changing its import, it turns against himself.

§ 6. The idea of *salvation*, again, is often confounded with the *means* of salvation, especially when connected with *election*, and a conclusion is drawn from the one to the other which has no force except from an assumed equivocal use of the terms, thus rendering his Lordship's argument incompatible with his professed sentiments. Thus he states and infers:—"At the close of his first epistle, St Peter says, 'The church that is at Babylon, *elected* together with you:' here the apostle calls the whole church of Babylon also *elect*, which agains proves that the word is *applied generally to collective bodies* of Christians, to *all who* in one or more cities or countries *professed Christianity, without any discrimination;* and that it is not *confined* to individuals who must necessarily be saved, or who were predestinated by God to certain salvation; or even to those who will *actually be saved*."* What is this but saying, that to be "elected" to the means of salvation, is not to be predestinated to certain salvation itself? We all know that to be "elected" to the participation of the means of happiness is not the same thing as to be "elected" to happiness. In the former sense, "collective bodies," even "all who profess Christianity without any discrimination" may be "elected," and yet the greater part of them, through their own fault, not saved. Now, his Lordship's own account of election is, that the actual enjoyment of the means of salvation, consisting in "Christianity professed," constitutes the persons "elected;" and, therefore, with what consistency can he urge, that "those who will *actually be saved*," are not in another, that is, the Calvinistic sense, "elected?" If the fact of superior means and privileges imply *election*, as he allows, how can he consistently oppose the Calvinists, who say that those who are in *fact* saved are "elected" to that salvation? Divest the terms of their ambiguity, and the case will appear plain: collective bodies, because they are favoured with the *means* of salvation, are "elected" to those means; and individuals, because

* Refutation, p. 205.

they are favoured with *salvation itself* in heaven, are "elected" to that salvation. For his Lordship to oppose this, is to buffet himself.

§ 7. Of the same complexion is the following passage:—"St Paul says to Timothy, 'I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain salvation,' &c. This is perfectly consistent with the idea of the elect being *Christian converts in general*, who might or might not be saved, but cannot be reconciled with the Calvinistic notion, that the *elect* are persons infallibly destined to salvation."* His Lordship allows that "Christian converts in general" are "elected" that they may obtain the *means* of salvation, and we allow the same; but then this is by no means inconsistent with *some* of these converts being "elected" to still higher blessings. And if it were inconsistent for St Paul to "endure all things for the elect's sake" in the latter sense, was it not equally so in his Lordship's acceptation? The Calvinists may turn his argument upon himself: Of what use was it for Paul to travel from country to country, and suffer all things for the sake of "Christian converts in general," seeing they were *elected* to become such in the purpose of God, and included in the plan of His providence? If they were "chosen" to become such in the Divine purpose, why should St Paul endure so many hardships to secure what was already fixed? In this case, also, while his Lordship argues against the Calvinists, he is equally the opponent of himself.

§ 8. A similar confusion of terms occurs in the use of the words *denial, preterition*, and *reprobation*:—"If God of His own good pleasure *elected* certain persons exclusively to be eternally happy, by furnishing them, through His especial grace, with His own appointed means of faith in the death of Christ, it is implied that those means are *denied* to the rest of the human race, who are *passed over*, and *left* to their own unassisted power. This *denial* or *preterition* is in fact *reprobation;* for both Calvinists and ourselves believe, that 'man by his own natural strength and good works *cannot* turn to faith,' the only appointed means of salvation; and that 'the fault and corruption of every man that is naturally engendered of Adam, deserveth God's wrath and damnation, which he is of himself unable to avert.'"† Here we are taught that "denial," "preterition," and "reprobation," are

* Refutation, p. 212. † Ibid., p. 255.

synonymous; and that the *election* of some to certain privileges implies that these privileges "are *denied* to the rest of the human race, who are *passed over* and *left* to their own unassisted power." His Lordship is here condemned on his own shewing. He allows that all professing Christians are "elected;" consequently, those who are not professing Christians, to whom the means of salvation were never sent, are "denied" these means; that is, all who are not elected, in his *own* sense of the term, are the objects of "denial," of "preterition," and of "reprobation,"—and these are by far "the greater part" of the human race.

§ 9. From his Lordship's distinct confession, he, no less than the Calvinists, believes that man by his own strength "cannot" turn to the appointed means of salvation; yea, *deserveth* God's wrath, which he is of himself unable to avert. Of course, then, those millions of the human race who are not "elected" to the *means* of salvation, are, according to his own scheme, denied, passed over, left, reprobated. If election and reprobation are inseparable, or necessarily imply each other, as taught by Calvin and his Lordship, wherein consists the difference between the Reformer and the dignitary? Truly in this, that the former regards a number of mankind individually, and the latter a number of them collectively, reprobated. The one parcels out his numbers in retail, the other disposes of them in the gross. Which of these ideas is the most revolting, as implying "denial," it is difficult to say. In this volume, at any rate, no such doctrine is held.

§ 10. All mankind are chosen to enjoy *some* benefits; a part of them are elected, as nations who enjoy the gospel, to superior benefits; Christian congregations, to whom the gospel is faithfully preached, and the ordinances of Christ are duly administered, are elected in a still higher sense; while those individuals among them who have a sincere disposition and a lively faith, to whom it is given on the behalf of Christ not only to believe, but also to suffer for His name,—those who have preventing and confirming grace, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation,—are elected to blessings so great, that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man" to conceive their greatness and excellence. But while we hold election in different senses or degrees, we disavow the idea of "denial" in the *active* sense. We maintain no "reprobation" except what belongs to those of mankind who are finally (ἀδόκιμοι) *disapproved*

in the scriptural sense of this term. By hastily adopting the hyper-Calvinistic idea of election and reprobation as inseparable, though the 17th Article wisely disjoins them, his Lordship exhibits another display of that species of warfare in which he seems so peculiarly to excel.

§ 11. The attentive reader of the "Refutation" may perceive many other terms, especially in the quotations from the fathers, which are used in an equivocal sense, where the reasoning is fallacious, and inconsistent with sentiments avowed by themselves. For instance, they frequently confound necessity and force, cause and occasion, freedom and power, grace in the objective and in the subjective sense, election in a connected and in an unconnected sense, &c. While men consider themselves privileged to use equivocal terms in an undefined sense, instead of candid controversy, for the purpose of investigating and ascertaining truth, its legitimate end, their contest will invariably degenerate into unprofitable and irritating logomachy. Were theologians and writers on moral science to imitate the laudable example of mathematicians and judicious writers on natural philosophy, by fixing either univocal or defined terms to specific ideas, their lucubrations would be far more honourable to themselves and useful to the public.

Section II.

Assumed Principles of Moral Obligation.

§ 1. The "Refutation" assumes that *something more* than physical powers, moral means, and freedom is requisite to constitute moral obligation. § 2. This assumption exemplified in a variety of quoted phrases. § 3. To suppose that *internal grace* is *essential* to moral obligation, is subversive of the idea of moral government. § 4. The "Refutation" assumes that the *liberty* of moral agents is a physical *power*.—The fallacy exposed. § 5. That the efficacy of moral means does not essentially depend on a *previous disposition*.—This proved an inconsistency. § 6. That an *influence* followed with a *certainty* of result in moral actions is incompatible with *freedom*.—The assumption disapproved. § 7. That if the event be *certain*, means are superfluous.—This proved to be erroneous. § 8. The true notion of moral obligation should be sought from the *essential characters* of God and the creature; and, § 9. From the *relation* subsisting between the Governor and the governed. § 10. The *importance* of correct views of moral obligation.

§ 1. Another ground of inconsistency, with truth and with themselves, in the Bishop and the fathers quoted by him, is the assumption of certain principles of moral obligation which are demonstrably unfounded. One of these is, that something more than physical powers, (or faculties,) moral means, and freedom, is requisite to constitute obligation in a moral sense. By "physical *powers*," I mean intellect and will, (an intellect to represent an object, a will to choose it,) and a capability of enjoying the chief good; which is that excellency of our nature by which we are essentially distinguished from the brute creation, and by which we are physically capacitated to enjoy happiness in God. By "moral *means*," I understand objective inducements or considerations presented to our physical powers. And by "freedom," I mean exemption from constraint to evil, and restraint from good, in our elections. Besides these requisites, however, the advocates for self-determination of the will imagine that some occult quality—an undefined and undefinable something behind the scene, which, however, they denominate active power, &c., but of which they do not profess to form any precise idea—is needful to constitute moral obligation, or to render us accountable agents.

§ 2. Thus his Lordship often asserts that man has "the *power* of obeying," is "*capable* of obeying;" that "God gives to *every man*

. . . . a *power* to perform the conditions of the gospel;" that "to *deny* this *power* to *any individual* would be inconsistent with the attributes of God." Sometimes this power is termed "baptismal grace," and sometimes we are told "that *every man* is *enabled* to attain salvation through the merits of Christ;" that "*all* who were to *partake* of Adam's corrupt nature were to *partake* also of the appointed remedy;" that the second Adam "*restored* all to *life;*" that "the Jews had a *power* of understanding and believing;" that "it is in the *power* of every one to attain eternal happiness;" that God has "*enabled* every man born into the world to work out his own salvation;" that Christ died "to *enable* every individual descendant of Adam to obtain eternal happiness;" that "if *mankind* had not *the power* by free-will to avoid what is disgraceful, and to choose what is good, *they would not be responsible* for their actions." Again, God determined to make men and angels "with *full power* to act justly." God created angels and men "to do whatever He gave them *strength to be able to do.*" "We have produced wickedness; but those who have produced it *have it in their power* again to renounce it." Man has "*power* over himself." Men "will receive the just judgment of God, because they have not worked good when *they had it in their power* to work it." "Man *is in his own power* with respect to faith, ... in his own *free-will and power.*" The wicked Jews were "*able* to act justly." "Neither praise, nor dispraise, nor honours, nor punishments would be *just,* if the soul had not the *power* of desiring or rejecting." God has given us a "free sovereign *power.*" "That thing is *in our own power,* of which we are equally masters, as of its opposite." "God pardons what is past, but *every one* has the future *in his own power.*" "Every one has the *power* of choosing good, and of choosing evil." "When He gives other commandments, He shews that it is *in our power* to keep them." "It is the will of God that man should obey the understanding, and he has *received power* to subject himself." Sometimes, again, this inward power is expressed in very different language. "No one is born *without Christ;*" and no one is born "without having in himself *the seeds* of wisdom, and of justice, and of the other virtues." "What would be more unjust, than that those should be punished who are not *able to do* what ought to be done?" "*Grace* is *poured upon all,* excepting neither Jew nor Greek, nor old nor young, but coming to all equally."

§ 3. These passages, and many more of the same tendency, are evidently designed to shew that mankind possess a "power" or "strength" which is the ground of responsibility. If the meaning be that man has physical powers, moral means, and freedom, why are they produced against Calvinists, who admit this in the fullest extent? But if something more be intended, as is probably the case in several expressions and phrases, *what is it?* If it admit of no description or explanation, may not its existence readily be doubted? Is it baptismal grace? Then but a small part are under moral obligation! Is it a portion of the grace of Christ afforded to every child of Adam? Two considerations offer themselves against the doctrine: first, it wants evidence to support it; and, secondly, the supposition that internal grace is a requisite ground of moral obligation is subversive of the very nature of moral government. Even supposing that every descendant of Adam has from his birth a portion of the grace of Christ, this would not alter the case. As the very notion of moral government implies a possible deviation from rectitude, and a loss of the Divine favour, if the ground of the obligation did not continue unalterably the same, through all vicissitudes and bereavements, the greater the moral impotence,—in other words, the depravity of the subject,—the more free from obligation! If this be not utterly subversive of moral government, it is difficult to say what is. On this principle, our first father Adam, by his delinquency, must have removed himself from obligation to the Supreme Governor, because destitute of an essential requisite; and, for the same reason, the fallen angels are under no obligation to love their Maker, but must have removed themselves from His government, and have a ground of accusation against Him, because His claims continue, and yet they have no inward grace as a requisite of moral obligation.

§ 4. Another ground of inconsistency, and of much confusion, is the notion that the liberty which is essential to moral obligation is a *physical power*. It is more than probable that this idea was affixed to several of the words and phrases above quoted. Without doubt, however, this is a very common idea with the advocates of a self-determining power. The word "liberty," and the epithet "free," prefixed to "will," being positive terms, by the use of which the mind is too apt to be influenced in forming ideas, we are in

danger of being betrayed into the notion that some positive idea is intended to be conveyed by them, and therefore that they express some physical power. But if we substitute negative terms conveying the very same ideas, the fallacy may be more easily detected. What is *free-will* but unrestrained, unconstrained, unbound, or unforced will? Whatever terms are employed to express it, the idea is decidedly negative, as denoting a denial or exemption. Who can describe, who can conceive, anything more as implied in the idea of liberty or freedom? The will indeed is a physical faculty by which power is exerted, but its freedom is a negation of all foreign interference in its exercise.

§ 5. As another ground of embarrassment, in reference to moral obligation, we may notice the supposition, that the efficacy of moral means does not essentially depend on a previous disposition of the heart. Moral means are objective considerations presented to the mind, in the way of persuasion or dissuasion; and the effect, as either good or bad, in a moral sense, will be according to the manner in which the free-will stands affected towards them. The same moral means affect different free-volitions in a manner directly opposite; but this could not take place without some essential difference in the persons themselves. The will in both cases is equally free, and as a faculty it uniformly seeks apparent good. Consequently, if there were not some principle in the mind more radical than free-will, moral means would affect every mind in the same manner. Now what can this principle be but the disposition of the heart, as either good or bad, light or dark, according to which the moral means *appear* either eligible or ineligible? A depraved state of mind sees nothing practically eligible in a holy life, though the person has no convincing argument against it; nay, though many arguments in its favour may be confessed by him to be unanswerable. On the other hand, a virtuous or gracious state of mind, styled in Scripture "a good and honest heart," sees a holy life practically eligible; and the free-will chooses accordingly. In both cases the moral obligation is the same, though the results are diametrically opposite.

§ 6. Nearly similar to this is another perplexing prejudice, that an influence, or an efficiency, securing the *certain* result of moral actions, is incompatible with liberty; but this prejudice is occasioned by mistaken apprehensions of the true nature of liberty. A

principle of grace, ameliorating and enlightening the mind, has no more tendency to diminish freedom than had the spotless purity and superior unction of Jesus Christ to diminish His liberty. It was in consequence of confused notions of liberty, and its incompatibility with preventing grace, that some of the fathers (when *duty* was out of the question) advanced this crude sentiment—that the beginning must be from ourselves. If, indeed, they had confined this notion to the *obligation* of beginning from ourselves, it might well be admitted; for a defect of principle, as before shewn, does not alter the ground of obligation. A depraved descendant of Adam is as much obliged to love God, and to live in righteousness and true holiness, as Adam himself was in a state of integrity. The reason is, that both alike have the same ground of moral obligation—physical powers, moral means, and freedom. Take away any one of these, and moral obligation ceases; but while these continue, the obligation remains unimpaired. The design of Divine influence, therefore, is not to weaken, or in any way to alter the obligation, but to "*enable*" the subject to discharge it.

§ 7. Another prejudice that pervades the "Refutation" is, that if the event be certain, exhortations and other moral means are superfluous. One might think that the whole system of prophecy is a sufficient exposure of this false notion. If prophetic events were not certain, how could they be certainly predicted? and yet we find that they are constantly accomplished by the use of moral means. In fact these means are an essential requisite for moral determinations. If the law or the gospel were not made known to free agents, how could they love or hate them, and how could prophecies of these results be certainly accomplished? God foreknows not only the free-will of the agent, but also the principle according to which he will view moral means; and, therefore, what will be his determinations in given circumstances, with infinite precision. He knows what a free agent, left to his own principle, will do or will not do; and what the same or another agent, still equally free, when endowed with another principle in different degrees, according to divinely wise and sovereign pleasure, will determine or will not determine. If the depraved were not exhorted, how could a non-compliance be foretold? And if the better principled were not exhorted, how could their compliance be recorded as futurely *certain*?

§ 8. Having noticed some of the false grounds of moral obligation, it may be proper to subjoin a few remarks on its nature. In order to ascertain this, it is in vain that we look to what mankind actually do, or to observe the operations of the human mind, on the plan of inductive philosophy. On the present subject, to know by the most accurate observation the matter of fact will never teach us the matter of right. From what is done by a free agent, we cannot infer what ought to be done. We must therefore have recourse to the essential characters of God and man respectively, and the consequent subsisting relations. Through the medium of Divine revelation, which fully approves itself to right reason, we learn that God is the only independent and self-sufficient being, that He is the objective chief good, holy in His nature, equitable in His proceeding, and sovereignly beneficent. The essential character of man, as a subject of moral government, is, that he is absolutely dependent upon God,—is possessed of intellect, will, and freedom,—and is capable of enjoying the chief good.

§ 9. Hence we see the relation subsisting between the Governor and the governed. There can be no happiness but in harmony with His will, which is ever conformable to the absolute rectitude of His nature. A voluntary harmony with His will is real virtue; and the want of it, in moral agents, is real vice. A moral agent who, in his determinations, opposes God's holy will, at the same time opposes His holy nature. Now, to suppose that a voluntary determination of the agent, in contrariety to the will and nature of the Governor, is not *opposed* by equity, would be a contradiction; would be to suppose God to be adverse to evil, and yet not adverse to it,—to be unchangeable in His aversion to what is wrong, and yet changeable. Hence to be opposed by equity, is to be *obliged* to endure the consequence of not enjoying the chief good; and when a capacity for happiness is not gratified, the necessary effect is misery. Consequently, he that *will not be virtuous*, must be, is, *obliged* to be miserable from the nature of things,—that is, from the nature of the Governor and the governed.

§ 10. Were this point properly considered, we should have fewer controversies about original sin, free-will, Divine operations on the mind, faith, good works, the nature and extent of the price of redemption, election and predestination to life. We should also

perceive the fallacy of some inferences drawn from the doctrines of sovereign grace by its friends, and triumphantly echoed by its foes. Had the fathers and the schoolmen been better acquainted with moral obligation, and the true principles of moral science, they would never have given us so many fanciful interpretations of Scripture, nor have been so frequently inconsistent with themselves.

Section III.

Erroneous views respecting the Divine Prerogative.

§ 1. That God is absolutely *supreme*, and His will in some respects *arbitrary*, is universally acknowledged. § 2. But not arbitrary in judgments and punishments. § 3. What implied in the prerogative of sovereignty. § 4. Evidence of its exercise toward mankind, from the revealed fact of salvation provided. § 5. From the proclamation of mercy. § 6. From awful sanctions proving ineffectual; and, § 7. From the joint considerations of human imbecility and the effects produced on some minds. § 8. Others have no ground of complaint. § 9, 10. God, in the exercise of sovereign prerogative, is no respecter of persons. § 11. Man has great need of its exercise. § 12. Its exercise is injurious to none.

§ 1. That God is absolutely supreme, is an acknowledged fact; and that in some respects and instances He is sovereign, that is, arbitrary, must be also allowed by every reflecting person. To what else can be ascribed the existence of the created universe, and the differences of material beings of which it is composed? What a sovereign variety is discoverable in the mineral, the vegetable, and the animal world! How various their natures, their properties, and their designed ends! These things are generally confessed, as they do not immediately affect the principles of morality and religion. But no sooner do we extend the sovereign prerogative to the human mind, than the trumpet of alarm is loudly sounded, as if some great injury to man were the necessary consequence. These fears, however, are utterly groundless; we need only understand the subject in order to restore our tranquillity, provided our tempers and dispositions are not depraved. We shall then not only acquiesce with submission, but also adore with gratitude.

§ 2. It is inconsistent with the Divine perfections to suppose that God acts arbitrarily towards His creatures, except in the communication of good. The very notion of judgments or punishments implies that they are deserved by those on whom they are inflicted; and even the manner of the infliction is not, properly speaking, *arbitrary*, except when there is a favourable deviation from the rigid claims of justice. Though mankind are

sometimes afflicted with the sword, pestilence, or famine, still they might say with truth, "It is of the Lord's *mercies* that we are not consumed" to a greater degree, and in a more dreadful manner. Justice in every manifestation of it is indeed *supreme*, as is every attribute of the Deity, but never arbitrary. Had Calvin duly reflected on this fundamental principle, he would not have disfigured his admirable pages with a reprobating decree; nor would many other valuable writers have attempted to soften the sentiment by the self-contradictory notion of a *decree* to *permit* moral evil.

§ 3. The Divine prerogative of sovereignty which is here asserted is that of communicating *good* of any kind, in any degree, and in whatever manner God pleases. Hence we find that different persons have not only a greater portion of corporeal beauty and strength, but also a greater degree of mental capacity than others. And in this respect the words of the apostle are apposite:—"Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?"* Whatever mental quality differs from another for the better is from the sovereign pleasure of God, who worketh all such things according to the infinitely wise counsel of His will. It was this sovereign pleasure that formed all the laws of the universe, and has given to all intelligent creatures an accountable existence.

§ 4. It enters into the essential nature of accountability that the subject of it is, in his own nature, liable to transgress. And we all are constrained to acknowledge it, as an awful and alarming fact, that all mankind are transgressors, whereby they are adverse to the holiness and justice of the Supreme Governor, and whereby, as a necessary consequence, the same glorious attributes are adverse to them, in the same degree. From the Divine prescience no future state of man or any individual event was concealed. Hence the exercise of the Divine sovereignty in a plan of mercy. All mankind, if left to feel the just demerit of sin, must have continued in guilt and misery. But now, in virtue of an atoning substitute in our nature, provided by sovereign mercy, a ministry of reconciliation is established. A proclamation is gone forth, "Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom." The gospel of the kingdom was ordered to be published among all

* 1 Cor. iv. 7.

nations, and to be proposed to every human creature capable of attending to it.

§ 5. Now let us inquire, *Who believes the report?* The natural man understandeth not the things that are spiritual, nor can he know them; because, in order that they may savingly profit, they must be spiritually discerned. Millions turn a deaf ear to the call of Wisdom, though they cannot object to the plan without at the same time displaying their folly. "Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: she crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you." *. This is the language of merciful Wisdom to the human race, and shews the compassion of God towards the ignorant and wicked,—the obligations of men to turn to God by submission and repentance,—and a gracious promise annexed, which would be fulfilled upon their compliance.

§ 6. As the promise of Divine favours is proposed to men on an equitable condition, the alternative of refusal is accompanied with an awful threatening:—"Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil." † In this awful passage of God's Holy Word we observe these particulars: first, that the persons addressed, however wicked, must possess all the requisites of moral obligation; secondly, that a refusal of what is in itself so reason-

* Prov. i. 20–23. † Prov. i. 24–33.

able deserves the severest punishment; thirdly, that the nature of this punishment is the righteous opposition of God to their wickedness, that they eat the fruit of their own way, and are filled with their own devices; fourthly, that there is a period beyond which God will not wait to be gracious. Slighted mercy to the end of life, leaves the wicked in fear, distress, and anguish.

§ 7. The question again returns, *Who believes the report?* The answer is, They to whom "the arm of the Lord is revealed." They who are made "willing in the day of His power." They into whose hearts a Divine light shines, that they may be enabled to recognise the voice and design of Divine Wisdom. All men to whom the call and the warning are addressed ought to submit and obey; but do all yield obedience and submission? On what rational or scriptural principle can we found the difference of result? If we renounce the Divine prerogative of shewing additional mercy to some, of taking away the heart of stone and giving a heart of flesh, of putting His fear in their hearts, and of opening them by His gracious influence to receive the truth, are we not chargeable, at the same time, with an attempt to contract the exercise of His beneficence? What can be a greater affront to the Supreme Majesty, than to fix the limits of His bounty by our own imperfect standard?

§ 8. The question is not, Why does not God impart converting grace to *all?* For our opponents do not think it right that He should impart it to *any*, until they shew *of themselves* first a willing mind. The proper question therefore is this: Why should we suppose that God does more in the way of preventing internal grace for some than for others, while all, in themselves considered, are supposed to be equally undeserving? The true answer is, because His favours are *His own*, and He has a sovereign prerogative "to do what He will with His own." For this reason the fallen angels have no right to reclaim against God that He has provided a Mediator, and a plan of mercy through Him for the recovery of myriads of the human race, while no such provision is made for the restoration of any one of their number. And for the same reason the major part of the human race, immersed in idolatry and superstition, will have no ground to object, in the day of final judgment, against their Maker and Judge, that they were not favoured with the message of reconciliation, that they had not

the same motives presented to them to induce them to repentance and conversion.

§ 9. That God in the character of a *Judge* has "no respect of persons," but gives to every one his due, is fully acknowledged. In this view, He regards neither high nor low, rich nor poor, princes nor peasants, Jew nor Greek, Christian nor Mohammedan, Barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free; but in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him. If we assert, however, that no one is *enabled* to believe, repent, and obey, *more* than another, we deny to God the prerogative of a benefactor. If we accuse Him of unworthy *partiality*, on supposition that He communicates to some more than to others a principle of grace, whereby they are spiritually enabled to obey the heavenly call, we arraign His wisdom and goodness at the bar of our own ignorance and folly. Every such objection proceeds on this fundamental error, that all are alike worthy of Divine favours; whereas the truth is that all are *alike unworthy*. In the former case, a partial distribution would be unjust, but not so in the latter. If all *nations* were equally worthy, all other nations might justly remonstrate against the partiality of Jehovah towards Israel; and if all *persons* were equally worthy, all other persons might justly object that they are less favoured than Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, David or Solomon, John the Baptist, the virgin Mary, or the apostles John, Peter, or Paul, &c. Equality of worthiness establishes a just claim; but an equality of unworthiness leaves room for the full exercise of a sovereign prerogative, ever administered in wisdom.

§ 10. Some indeed have supposed, as we have seen from Chrysostom and Theodoret, whose opinions the Bishop of Lincoln seems to regard with complacency, that such partiality is subversive of rewards and punishments. But this proceeds on a false notion of the rule of final judgment, as if it were by the source of ability that the Judge will decide, rather than by the law of rectitude, which requires a good character and conduct. If these be approvable in the view of Divine legislation, irrespectively of the source from whence they proceeded, it is all that an equitable judge can demand. To suppose a demur to arise from the consideration of a wicked character not having had preventing grace, as a reason of his not being punished,—or of a righteous character having had preventing grace, by which he was enabled to become

such, as a reason why he should not be rewarded,—would be indeed most thoroughly subversive of all judicial proceedings.

§ 11. Will it be urged, that none of the human race have any *need* of inward preventing grace? Then, indeed, the bounty in question would be extremely superfluous. But I suspect some ambiguity in the terms, by which the objector is deceived. A thing may be needful for one end, which is not so for another; and to argue from the one to the other would be fallacious. It is granted that none of the human race have need of this bounty, in order to render them obliged and accountable; and this is equally true of the worst and the best of characters. If the latter of these be asked, whether they had any need of special grace in order to render them what they are, I believe the general answer would be in the affirmative. However great the difference, they will acknowledge distinguishing grace, by the exercise of a Divine sovereign prerogative, to be the efficient cause of it. Nor is it supposable that any characters finally condemned by the righteous Judge will imagine that they had no "need" of what they formerly despised. What is not needful to clear the character of the Judge, or to vindicate His condemnation of the guilty, may be very needful to change their hearts, and to secure their happiness. But as all revealed blessings are proposed to men in a conditional form, and these conditions are perfectly equitable, they have no plea for transferring the blame from themselves. Though parents, or masters, or ministers, have neglected their duty towards them, —though wicked men or wicked spirits tempted them to walk in evil ways,—and though providential goodness furnished them with that plenty which proved the occasion of pride, luxury, haughtiness, and other evil passions, still they have no exculpating plea. The wicked man must die in his wickedness; and those who have voluntarily neglected their duty towards him, or enticed him to evil, shall bear their own portion of guilt.

§ 12. Nor can it with truth be asserted that this exercise of the Divine prerogative would be injurious to any. Not to the subject of grace; for the very design of it is to make him better and happier. It implies no force upon his freedom; he is equally free to good and evil as he was before. The difference is, that after he has received the light and life of grace, he freely chooses the good which he before refused; and freely refuses the evil which he before chose. Nor can it be injurious to any other; for what

possible injury can it be to those among whom his lot is cast, or to the world at large, that a sinner is converted from the error of his ways? On the contrary, it may be of great advantage to many. His upright conversation, his holy affections, his heavenly discourse, his faithful testimonies, and his salutary warnings, may do incalculable good, as in the case of St Paul. He may, indeed, prove an innocent occasion of exciting a persecuting spirit and conduct, or the evil passions of envy, hatred, malice, and uncharitableness; and so was the spotless character of the Saviour himself; but is this inflicting an injury upon those who are so wrought upon? Oh no! they receive no injury which does not proceed from themselves. There is not, in short, a single being in the universe who can be fairly said to be injured by the preventing grace of God, and the exercise of His prerogative to confer discriminated favours.

Section IV.

Wrong Notions respecting the Ultimate Sources *of Virtue and Vice.*

§ 1. Why many have supposed that the *will* is the *ultimate* source of virtue and vice. § 2. The *absurdity* of that sentiment exposed. § 3. The apparent *reason* why several of the Christian fathers adopted this notion. § 4. The immediate *source* of vice is not the will, but the *heart*. § 5. The real *cause* of an evil heart. § 6. How this cause may be *counteracted*. § 7, 8. Wisdom and folly illustrative of the nature and character of virtue and vice. § 9. Remarks on *virtue*, as to what is *essential*, and what *perfective*. § 10. Concluding observations respecting *vice*, its nature and cause.

§ 1. There is great reason to think that many sensible persons have been betrayed into the notion of a self-determining property in the human will, from the assumed principle that the will itself is the ultimate source of virtue and vice; and this assumption they have, no doubt, been induced to make, from the acknowledged fact that there is neither virtue nor vice in human actions *without* the determination of the will. But the will's determination being essential to the moral quality of a human action does by no means prove that it is the ultimate source of that action. The exercise of the intellect is no less essential than that of the will; but no one can thence infer that it is the ultimate source of virtue and vice. What is now contended for is briefly this—that the ultimate source of virtue, and of every good moral action, is God, from whom all good in the universe proceeds; or, if we seek for a source considered as existing in the human mind, it is a gracious principle, the effect of a sovereign energy. And it is further maintained, that the ultimate source of all vice is a negative principle of defectibility, whereby actions physically good become morally evil.

§ 2. The advocates for self-determination, by supposing the will to be the ultimate source of moral actions, are constrained to hold this absurdity—that things diametrically opposite in their nature, as virtue and vice, proceed from the same ultimate source; which is the same as to maintain, that things directly opposite in their nature proceed from that which has the same uniform

nature! Not only the same conduit, the will, may be the medium of conveying at different times both sweet water and bitter,—which we admit,—but also that they spring from the same fountain! When the apostle James assures us that "every good gift and every perfect gift cometh from above, from the Father of lights," it is implied that things of a different quality do not come from that source. A good will, if anything in our world, is included in St James's assertion; and a bad will is included in other things of a different quality. God, therefore, and not the human will, is the ultimate source of virtue. When He enlightens the mind and influences the heart, according to His sovereign prerogative, in a greater or less degree, free virtuous actions will be the sure effects. The determination of the will, indeed, is a condition *sine quâ non* of the virtuous quality of its act; but without grace in the heart, and without a communication of that grace from God, there could not be one virtuous act, in the proper sense of this epithet, among either men or angels. He who would deny this would also deny that God is the fountain of all good,—a truth which ought surely to be admitted, by all persons professing *Christianity*, as an undoubted axiom.

§ 3. And yet this proposition, so evident in Sacred Scripture, and so approvable by unbiased reason, was very strangely called in question by some of the fathers, when they asserted that good actions are only *permitted;* and that the "*beginning*" must be from ourselves, not only in point of obligation, but in point of fact. Surely such a representation, so far from being the language of heavenly wisdom instructing mankind, betrays a lamentable want of it. If they reflected at all, when penning such phrases, they must have proceeded on the supposition that otherwise our *bad* actions would be from God. The recoil from one extreme carried them to another. They dreaded the impiety of tracing our evil deeds to God's will; and therefore they rashly encountered the opposite danger, as they saw no medium, by fixing upon the human will as the common source of our good and our evil. This indeed is a short method of simplifying the subject, to bring every act of virtue and vice to the same fountain; but it is to simplify at the expense of revealed religion and of genuine philosophy.

§ 4. Where, then, it may be rejoined, shall we find the ultimate source of vice, if not in the human will, as a self-determining

faculty? I answer, in the HEART, according to the scriptural acceptation of the term. Our Saviour tells us, that "out of the *heart* proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man."* This "heart" must be something more intimate and radical than the will; for it is the source of "evil thoughts," as well as of evil words and actions. To an evil heart is often ascribed in Scripture, hardness, blindness, impurity, pride, foolishness, grossness, and insensibility. Over an evil heart there is a veil; and to a blind or hard heart St Paul imputes ignorance and a "darkened understanding."† Solomon addresses fools as those who have not "an understanding heart."‡ He observes also, that "the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live."§ Such things, in short, through different parts of Scripture, are ascribed to the "heart" as prove decisively that it is a more internal source of moral actions than the will. The exercise of this faculty is both *from* the heart and *as* the heart. If this be enlightened and wise, so is the choice; but if dark and foolish, the choice is of the same character.

§ 5. It was before granted that the free determination of the will is essential in order to stamp any act as vicious; and it has been shewn that something more intimate than the will is intended by the heart. But the evil quality of the heart is neither from God nor from chance; and yet we cannot deny it to be without a cause, in some sense of this word, unless at the same time we renounce the fundamental axiom, that there is no effect without a cause. It was for want of ascertaining the real cause of an evil heart, and consequently of vice, that the fathers are so often found contradicting themselves and one another. These contradictions they would have avoided had they perceived that the ultimate source of all vice is a negative cause, as contradistinguished from a positive. Had they properly considered the attributes of man, or of any one creature, they might have perceived that he has not only faculties and qualities which are effects from the first cause, but also a principle of defectibility. While man is in one respect the image or likeness of his Creator, in another point of view he is a *contrast* to Him who "knows no variableness, neither shadow of turning." God is independent, all-sufficient, and im-

* Matt. xv. 19, 20.
† Eph. iv. 18.
‡ Prov. viii. 5.
§ Eccles. ix. 3.

mutable; but man is a contrast, and the attributes of essential dependence, insufficiency, and mutability, are inseparably attached to his being. A being not possessed of these essential attributes is not a creature.

§ 6. But though man cannot exist without these negative attributes, he is possessed of active faculties, which are capable of virtue and vice. He has an intellect adapted to perceive a law and its proper sanctions, a will to choose the good and refuse the evil, yet free to adopt either side. While an efficient principle prevails, his choice is virtuous; but while God is neglected, and influence from Him is despised or undervalued, the choice is vicious. The source of defectibility in man can be overruled only by the source of indefectibility in God; and a portion of gracious energy from Him, which He never denies to those who seek aright, is man's only security against vice. The most important part of self-knowledge of which man is capable, is to perceive practically and experimentally this essential difference between himself and his Maker.

§ 7. The respective natures of virtue and vice are often expressed by Solomon under the terms wisdom and folly; and with great strictness of propriety. Pure virtue, like pure wisdom, consists in the choice of a worthy end, and in the adoption of laudable means for attaining it. Partial virtue, like partial wisdom, is often found in wicked men. "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." They have the wisdom of the serpent, are wise to do evil; and were their end worthy, while their dexterity in the choice of means is admirable, they would shew themselves truly wise and virtuous. In real virtue something is essential, and something perfective. What is essential is, the choice of a chief end; what is perfective is, the adoption of laudable means. Hence, a person may be essentially virtuous, without being so perfectively. And this is the character of "the children of light" in general. They choose God for their chief good; but often fail in the means of attaining perfect conformity to His will and holy nature. And they have always reason for deep humiliation, when repeated long experience proves to them their imperfection of skill in accomplishing their end. They delight in the law of God after the inner man, but how to perform that which is good, perfectively of their virtue and holiness, they find not.

§ 8. On the other hand, many of "the children of this world," though vicious characters, may choose a variety of ends, more or less worthy in a partial sense, and discover an admirable degree of dexterity in the choice of means adapted to accomplish the end they have chosen. But if they choose not God as their chief end and final portion, their virtue is essentially defective, and so is their wisdom. They are wise for time, but fools for eternity. Neglecting God, they have neither eyes to see, nor ears to hear, nor hearts to perceive their best and highest interest. With Him is the fountain of life, and while they restrain prayer before Him, they confirm their state, by voluntary omissions, as dead in sin, and in the moral error of their ways. And they but too often despise those who act in a different manner; "but Wisdom is justified of her children."

§ 9. Before this discussion is closed, it may be remarked, that a failure even in the perfective part of virtue has in it the nature of sin. He who keepeth the whole law, and yet offendeth in one point, becomes a transgressor. He who knows and loves God is essentially virtuous, though partially defective; and he who knows and loves not God is essentially vicious, whatever other excellences he may possess. "Love is the fulfilling of the law," for it is the essential part of holiness and virtue; but the want of it is a breach of the whole law, and stamps a character as essentially vicious, and his every moral act has the nature of vice. There are many worthy ends, taking this epithet to denote worthiness in a subordinate sense, and many laudable means, including laudableness to any indefinite degree; which ends and means, though harmoniously combined, do not raise the subjects of them above the charge of being essentially vicious. And this is owing to the want of a worthy ultimate and *chief* end to which all others ought to be subordinated. A person destitute of the knowledge and love of God, who is the chief good, and therefore ought to be the chief end of the agent, cannot justly plead that he is essentially virtuous because he is, in an inferior sense, a good father, master, neighbour, or patriot; because he shuns many reigning vices, and promotes many virtuous designs. True virtue is not confined within any created circle, and aims at nothing short of infinite, even in the discharge of common duties.

§ 10. From the preceding account of the ultimate sources and the respective natures of virtue and vice, we may perceive that

vice is a species of *defect* in moral actions. A vicious act is a *wrong* act, and the wrong quality is a *defective* one—the want of what ought to be in the exercise of free volitions. But we cannot thence infer that the *principle* of the defect is itself vicious, since the exercise of a voluntary choice is an essential part of vice. Hence it follows demonstrably that the ultimate source of vice is not vicious. There is no vicious act which is not compounded of something positive, and therefore good, and of something negative or defective, and therefore evil in a comparative sense. The goodness of the act is its physical energy, which flows from God; the badness of the act is its moral defect, or a failure in the *manner* of exercising the physical faculties, when they are voluntarily directed to a wrong end, or to means of attaining it which are not laudable. Were there no principle of defectibility in the agent, every act would be perfectly virtuous; and were that principle itself of a vicious quality, in a moral sense, there would be no difference between cause and effect; vice would be the cause of vice, which is incompatible.

Section V.

The want of requisite acquaintance with reconciling Principles.

§ 1. For want of reconciling principles, the Bishop rejects the doctrine of universal and total *depravity*. § 2. Confounds physical *powers* and moral *propensities*. § 3. *Nature* and *grace*. § 4. The *passiveness* of man, with his *agency*. § 5. Divine *equity*, with *sovereignty*. § 6. *Exhibited* grace, with *subjective*. § 7. Faith as a *principle*, with faith as a *duty*. § 8. He confounds the *different relations* which are sustained by a justified person. § 9. The *price* of redemption, with *redemption* itself. § 10. That predestination which includes a *series* of events, with one that is *isolated* and imaginary.

§ 1. From the manner in which the Bishop has treated the different topics contained in his "Refutation," and from his numerous quotations from the fathers, it is manifest, that many things are advanced through the apprehension of consequences that would follow from a different statement of those opinions; which consequences, however, his Lordship might have seen would not follow, had he been more attentive to reconciling principles: those I mean, which are necessary in order to reconcile scripture with scripture, and facts with facts. For instance, his Lordship seems to apprehend that if we go so far as to maintain a universal and total moral depravity of mankind by the fall of Adam, it would imply a natural impossibility of recovery, or even of any improvement. He supposes it would exclude every voluntary effort, endeavour, or concurrence on the part of man,—every idea of distinction between right and wrong,—every good affection and moral sense. He also apprehends that the admission of such a degree of moral depravity must render men incorrigible, absolutely incapable of amendment, or of discharging any part of duty,—must reject all co-operation, and all improvement by discipline and exercise. If moral depravity be represented as universal and total, he prognosticates consequences if possible still more alarming; as if none could act according to the determination of reason, —all men, in every period, must be alike wicked,—neither patriarchs nor prophets could address the people, nor the people be addressed by them,—propensities, affections, and faculties, would be incapable

of control, cultivation, and enlargement,—there would exist no discrimination of moral character,—and there could have been no righteous characters in the time of Christ,—no good and honest hearts. These are his Lordship's alarming apprehensions.

§ 2. Does it not strike every intelligent person who reflects upon the subject, that his Lordship has most unaccountably overlooked the distinction, which ought ever to be maintained, between *physical powers,* or faculties, and *moral propensities?* To infer the destruction of the former from that of the latter, is as unreasonable as it would be to infer that not a chord of a stringed instrument remained undestroyed, because the instrument is become universally and totally out of tune; whereas an instrument may be thus out of tune, though every string remain entire; wanting only the skilful treatment of an artist to render it capable of producing sounds of sweet and varied harmony, as at the first. Such is the energy of Divine grace upon the mind. As no physical faculty was destroyed by sin, so no one is added by sovereign grace. The infinitely wise Author of our being, by His never-failing skill, makes the ignorant knowing, the foolish wise, the reluctant willing, the dead lively, the slothful vigilant. He who before murmured, gloomy and dissatisfied, now feels his heart glow with gratitude, and speaks the language of praise; he who before cursed, now blesses; he who before lifted up his voice in strife and contention, now pours forth prayers and supplications according to the will of God. He was deceitful, he is now upright; he was envious, he is now benevolent; he was consumed with unhallowed attachments, he is now devoted to the love of God and his neighbour. "Instead of the thorn is come up the fir-tree, instead of the bramble is come up the myrtle-tree."

§ 3. Another distinction overlooked by his Lordship is, that existing moral differences among mankind are to be ascribed to grace rather than to nature. Some worthy characters, some well-disposed persons, some good and honest hearts, have been found in every age of the world. But how unreasonable to infer from these acknowledged facts, that the difference is derived from natural excellence rather than from supernatural grace. From the fact of one human character in any period of time being far superior to others, how illogical the conclusion that he has made himself to differ, or that nature has left him less impaired! It is

most unfairly to beg the question, that all good is not from God; or that there may be some moral excellence among men which flows not from Divine grace. Admit this principle, that grace, not nature, forms the difference, and scripture will harmonise with scripture; deny it, and contradictions appear in all its parts. Whether his Lordship has not committed himself in this respect, every attentive reader may easily perceive. While truth is ever consistent with itself, when viewed through a just medium, it is the property of error to refute its own pretensions. One while it states that all mankind are "depraved," with "a propensity to evil and wickedness, universal in its extent and powerful in its effects;" another while, it extenuates the statement by pleading that some of these very persons were so "righteous" as to be "acceptable in the sight of God," without any acknowledgment of Divine grace. What though "the heart, the passions, the will, and the understanding, and, indeed, all the faculties and powers of Adam, were *greatly* corrupted, perverted, and impaired by his violation of the Divine command;" and what though "every individual descended from him be born into the world an imperfect and depraved creature;" still the corruption was not *so great* but there have been *some* worthy characters in every period of time! For we have upon record the excellences of Abel, Enoch, and Noah; of Abraham, Isaac, and Job; besides "seven thousand in Israel who had not bowed their knees to Baal!"

§ 4. His Lordship does not seem to have been aware of the passiveness of man as inseparably connected with his agency. If man were *merely* an agent, what conceivable ground of his happiness would there be in the nature of things? Absolutely exempted from the influence of preventing grace, while undeniably free from control in his choice, every man might fail alike of happiness. Admitting human depravity to be precisely what his Lordship admits, I ask, what is there in the nature of things that can secure the salvation of any individuals, except the prerogative and grace of God giving him a good will? On the other hand, if man were *merely* passive, he could not be accountable for his actions; laws and sanctions would be useless things, and future judgment an unmeaning ceremony. Separate one of these attributes from the being of man, and nothing is rationally explained; the whole of the scriptural representation of him becomes an inexplicable paradox,—rather, a series of perpetual contradictions. Admit the

fact, and the whole appears lucid and beautiful, coherent and harmonious.

§ 5. Another principle of the utmost importance, closely connected with the preceding, and greatly overlooked by his Lordship and the fathers, is the union of equity and sovereignty in the Divine character. Not that either is denied in words; but their appropriate exercise is not brought into the account. In his Lordship's theory, sovereignty has no effect *in* man, but only *towards* him in providing a Saviour. Every principle of discrimination *originates* with man, though in a fallen state; and every after bounty is only an exercise of equity in rewarding the creature's goodness. In a word, the whole is reduced to this one view of God—a merciful Governor. All that sovereign mercy does, is to provide moral means not allowed to fallen angels; and then justice engages to reward the worthy. But this is to limit "the Holy One of Israel" in that very point wherein man most needs His assistance, and in the exercise of mercy wherein God delights. It is an attempt to confine the hand of Omnipotence with the filmy cord of contingency; to restrain the Divine prerogative within the narrow confines of human self-sufficiency. Nay, more, it is to found the exercise of gracious power on human moral ability, and the exercise of mercy on human moral worthiness. In such a system everything must appear confused and contradictory; the perfections of God and the attributes of man are continually at variance. But if you admit that God governs His creatures, as free agents, with equity, and bestows favours upon them, as passive, with unrestrained sovereignty, to "the praise of the glory of His grace," the perplexity is unravelled, the Scriptures appear no longer a labyrinth, and seeming discordances are satisfactorily reconciled.

§ 6. Many contradictions might have been avoided by his Lordship, had he attended to the difference between *exhibitory* and *subjective* grace. Any reflecting reader of the "Refutation" may perceive how the Bishop and the fathers perpetually confound these essentially different considerations. The provision of mercy in a plan of mediation; God's gift of His beloved Son as our Saviour; His affording, to the fallen race of man, a Divine revelation; the proclamation of peace by the ministry of reconciliation; the display of gracious designs in gospel institutions; with the promise of His Holy Spirit to the believing, pardon to the penitent,

and eternal salvation to obedient Christians, are all expressive of *exhibitory* grace. These representations are only suitable means of a gracious moral government: they put no law in the mind, they open no blind eyes, unstop no deaf ears, unlock the door of no heart, without *subjective* grace. To the former belongs a universality of aspect and intention; it is the glad tidings of great joy sent to all nations, as in the course of providence a door of access is opened; it is grace in its external dispensation, proposed to free agents, who are the subjects of a gracious moral government. To the latter belongs the actual existence of Divine influence in the souls of individuals, whereby they are enriched with life and light, and whereby exhibited blessings become effectual to salvation. To the one, the agency of man stands essentially related; to the other, his passiveness as a subject of antecedent benefits. Without exhibitory grace, how could any be judged according to the gospel? Without subjective grace preventing us, that we may have a good will, what soul could be saved?

§ 7. Many discordant passages in his Lordship's discourse about *faith*, are owing to an oversight of the momentous difference subsisting between this grace considered as a principle and as a duty. In the former sense, it is the gift of God; in the latter, it is the act of man. The promises made to faith regard it as the act and duty of man; who, on believing, receives justification, and grace for grace. By faith, in this sense, the believer looks unto Jesus, trusts in Him for righteousness and strength, relies upon the promises, overcomes the world, and walks in the path of duty. By faith, in the other sense, he is made morally able to believe with the heart, and to perform, in the way of duty, other fiducial acts required. The one is, in a sense, of ourselves, because it is our own act; the other is exclusively from God, who quickeneth whom He will, and who bestows His blessings, as a sovereign Benefactor, according to the profundity of His wisdom. Faith, as a duty, is itself a good work, and draws other good works in its train, as exemplified in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews; but faith, as a principle, is no good work of ours, but "of the operation of God," *enabling* the soul "to do those things which are pleasing in His sight." Faith, as a Divine principle, or when taken figuratively for its object, or for its foundation, stands opposed to works, in several passages of the apostolic writings; but faith, as a duty, is included in works.

§ 8. Some incongruities are obvious in the chapter which treats of *justification,* for want of distinguishing the different relations which a justified person bears. In scriptural acceptation, a person is considered as *justified* in *Christ,* by *grace,* by *faith,* and by *works.* Justification in *Christ,* expresses the relation of union to Him, effected by an act of Divine sovereign prerogative. Justification by *grace,* expresses the relation of our personal unworthiness, who, had it not been for grace providing a substitute, must have continued guilty, and under condemnation. Justification by *faith,* expresses the relation of an arraigned criminal who is set at the bar of Divine justice to plead his defence in opposition to the charge of being destitute of a perfect righteousness. A perfection of righteousness is required by Divine law and justice; and in this respect it is hopeless to appeal to "works of righteousness which we have done." Divine revelation affords a testimony respecting Christ, that He is "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth;" this testimony, and his belief in it, the arraigned criminal pleads in his defence, and is regarded as justified. Justification by *works,* expresses the relation of a moral subject perpetually amenable to the law of right and wrong, commonly termed the moral law. In meeting this charge, it is not enough to plead that Christ is the end of the law, that grace has prepared a remedy, and that the Divine testimony is believed; for these pleas have been and still are admitted. It may be urged, you are still amenable to a rule of moral obedience, which, if you despise, it is a proof that your plea of an interest in the former privileges is a shallow pretence; since no one who has a genuine regard for, and faith in Christ, rejects His yoke. Bring the genuineness of your faith and the sincerity of your profession to this test. "Shew me thy faith by thy works." As the charge is *want of works,* it is evident that no plea can be urged for justification from the charge but the actual works required. And as these are justifying evidences in this life, so they will be at the last judgment, when the inquiry will be instituted, not only, What have you believed? but also, What have you done?

§ 9. In examining the "Refutation," we have met with some incongruous passages respecting *redemption,* which might have been avoided by means of the important distinction between the price, or valuable consideration, and the actual deliverance. The former is indefinite, as appears from the nature of the demand;

the obedience and sacrifice must be of infinite worth, or else of no worth at all, to answer the demands of law and justice. What is of infinite value cannot be in itself restricted; and, therefore, its aspect, when revealed and proposed to men, must necessarily be indefinite. But actual deliverance is a *personal* concern. Christ's having assumed our nature, lived a perfect character, and died a meritorious death, abstractedly considered, actually delivers no person. This latter benefit is a definite effect for the sake of an infinite, and, therefore, indefinite price. The *means*, or the price, of redeeming us from the curse of the law was the Saviour's being made a curse for us; but the redemption itself is our personal deliverance from guilt and condemnation, from sin and the power of Satan, and from the grave.

§ 10. In treating of predestination to life, his Lordship, as we have seen at large, has offered great violence to the Articles of his own Church, and has made them speak a language replete with contradiction. This he might have escaped, if he had regarded predestination as a Divine purpose respecting a *series* of beneficent events; instead of regarding it, as he has done, in an isolated point of view. That predestination, and that only, is consistent with itself, which never separates the means from the end, but includes the former as indispensably requisite to attain the latter. Under his Lordship's hand, while this connexion is overlooked, the wholesome doctrine, which "is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comforts to godly persons," is rendered to the last degree noxious and unlovely. In brief, he who professes that all our *good* and all our *happiness* must be ultimately referred to the Divine beneficence and purpose, cannot renounce the predestination we hold, but at the expense of consistency with his own profession.

CHAPTER VII.

CONCLUDING REMARKS ON THE EXCELLENCE OF RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE, AND ON THE BEST WAY OF OBTAINING IT.

§ 1. The particular *design* of this chapter. § 2. The *excellence* of religious knowledge. § 3. *Advancement* in this knowledge strongly enjoined in the Holy Scriptures. § 4. Proficiency in it *beneficial* to ourselves and others, even in *private* life. § 5. Especially to *public* instructors; and, § 6. To *disputants*. § 7. The *importance* of it further appears from its influence on practice. § 8. We should seek it, *first*, by the performance of *known duty*. § 9. The folly of neglecting this rule. § 10. This method recommended by the Holy Scriptures; and, § 11. Justified on rational principles. § 12, 13. We should seek it, *secondly*, by the exercise of *Christian candour*. § 14. *Thirdly*, by forbearing to *systematise* without *extensive information*; and especially, § 15. *Fourthly*, by cultivating a *devotional temper*.

§ 1. HAVING completed the proposed examination of the Bishop of Lincoln's "Refutation of Calvinism," and ventured to suggest some explanation of the numerous mistakes and inconsistencies which occur in that performance, I now request the reader's attention to a few CONCLUDING REMARKS of a more practical nature. My design is to point out the excellence of religious knowledge, and the best way of obtaining it. In connexion with which, I would fain bear the best testimony in my power against the principle and the operations of bigotry in polemical discussions; and encourage a liberal and enlarged way of thinking. This is far more worthy of the gospel of Christ, and of the talents with which we are intrusted, than contending for the interest of any external denomination.

§ 2. Of all objects contemplated by mortals, none is of equal excellence and importance with religion: it embraces the sublimest topics that the universe affords, relates to the purest enjoyments, involves our highest interest, and stands immediately connected

with endless consequences. Without religious knowledge no man, however distinguished in other respects, can be truly happy, or truly wise. "This is life eternal, that they might *know* thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."* Life is the well-being of any person or thing; and here it denotes that which is peculiar to the immortal soul. The right knowledge of God and of His Christ, therefore, stands immediately related to our eternal well-being.

§ 3. This knowledge being excellent in its nature, and glorious in its effects, it is no wonder that the sacred oracles so warmly recommend a progressive improvement in it:—"My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and *find the knowledge of God.* For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding."† A similar promise we have in the prophets, in a more concise form:—"Then shall we *know,* if we *follow on* to *know the Lord.*"‡ An attainment of inconsiderable value would not be represented in this manner by an inspired scribe. The devout Psalmist observes, "What man is he that feareth the Lord? him shall he *teach* in the way that he shall choose. . . . . The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will *shew them his covenant,*"§ or, His covenant to make them know it. The same sentiment is inculcated in the New Testament as a matter of apostolic exhortation:—"Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but *in understanding be men.*"‖ "Therefore *leaving* the principles [the mere rudiments] of the doctrine of Christ, let us *go on unto perfection.*"¶ "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may *grow* thereby."** "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But *grow* in grace, and in the *knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*"††

* John xvii. 3. † Prov. ii. 1–6. ‡ Hos. vi. 3. § Psa. xxv. 12, 14.
‖ 1 Cor. xiv. 20. ¶ Heb. vi. 1. ** 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2. †† 2 Pet. iii. 17, 18.

§ 4. Proficiency in religious knowledge, as appears from the Divine records, must be highly beneficial. When Solomon asserts, "that the soul be without knowledge, it is not good," * he evidently includes the counterpart, that the acquisition of knowledge *is* good. "Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness." † Religious knowledge is welcome to the mental eye, and Divine truth, as a light shining in a dreary solitude, illuminates the path of duty, and invigorates the moral traveller in the ways of wisdom. Before its benign power the clouds of ignorance dissolve and vanish; and while it enlarges the understanding, it refines the passions and purifies the heart. If, however, it is thus peculiarly advantageous to ourselves, it must be highly salutary to others who are within the circle of our influence. Even in a private sphere, we have opportunities of instructing the young and uninformed. If proficients ourselves, we shall impart knowledge with less embarrassment, solve the difficulties of the inquisitive with more ease, and lead them forward with greater delight. Perceiving the harmony of Divine truths, with their mutual dependence and connexion, our attachment to them will be more firm, and we shall be enabled to recommend them with becoming zeal and modest confidence.

§ 5. While such advantages attend progressive religious knowledge in private life, how much more advantageous will it be to public instructors! They have a more difficult office to fulfil, and a greater variety of characters to address. The speculative sceptic should have no cause to triumph over the ministers of Divine truth, as if they could not meet him on his own ground, and foil him with his own weapons. While he despises and ridicules the doctrines of our religion, let the edge of his boasted reason be turned upon himself. Falsehood cannot endure the test of close examination. If we are but sufficiently acquainted with comprehensive principles, every error may be proved, at least virtually, to be subversive of itself, and every vice may be shewn to be folly. When, too, the messengers of the King of heaven have enlarged and correct views of revealed truth, in all its parts and bearings, they are better able to give every one his portion of instruction or advice, of reproof or comfort, in due season; better able to judge on what articles of their message to lay the strongest emphasis, what parts ought to be brought most frequently to view, what

* Prov. xix. 2. † Eccles. ii. 13.

deviations from truth or duty are most dangerous, and by what means different errors may be most effectually checked or subverted.

§ 6. Polemical discussions, when conducted as they ought to be, are a species of public instruction, being an appeal to the general notice, on the comparative claims of different sentiments. Most disputed points have difficulties which require more than a slight knowledge of the subject; and when any one presumes to correct whole systems of doctrine without suitable information, truth is liable to suffer, and error to be propagated. Yet something more than mere knowledge is necessary for disputants. Controversy conducted without candour stirs up the worst of passions, indulges in unhallowed recriminations, insinuates suspicions of unworthy designs, rouses the spirit of bigotry from his slumbers, and, while it animates the excesses of party zeal, weakens the bonds of Christian amity. Divide and conquer is the maxim of an enemy.

§ 7. The great importance of progressive religious knowledge may be estimated from the salutary influence it possesses on Christian duties. It is a valuable guide to profitable devotion and useful practice. Yet we should be on our guard in estimating practice, as well as in deciding upon doctrine. The Jewish Pharisees, who rejected the Prince of life, were very expert practitioners in their way. But their obedience was not fashioned according to the Divine rule; was not directed to a worthy end, did not flow from a right principle. Approved practice includes devotion, the proper exercise of the heart and affections, as well as the external part of service. As a pretended devotion which is not accompanied with the discharge of personal and relative duties is essentially defective, so our duties without a devotional temper are but a body without the soul.

§ 8. Having pointed out briefly the excellency of religious knowledge, and some advantages which it is capable of affording, I shall now presume to offer a few words of advice, especially to my younger brethren in the ministry, as the result of long experience, respecting its attainment. And, *first*, seek it in the performance of known duty. In this enterprise, our Divine Teacher leads the way:—"If any man *will do his will*, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."* This is

* 1 John vii. 17.

the path, "walk ye in it." Conscientiously improve your talent, and you shall add to it:—"To him that hath shall be given." To attempt the depths of knowledge or the heights of speculation by any other process, is to encounter a dangerous voyage with crowded sails, while the ballast has been left behind. "Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Them that are *weaned* from the milk, and *drawn* from the breasts." * This reply to the important inquiry implies that selfish indulgences and immoderate worldly attachments are incompatible with profitable knowledge. Until the heart and affections are withdrawn and weaned from grovelling pursuits, such as those mentioned in the context, the learner is not qualified to receive even the rudiments of saving knowledge, much less to make a desirable proficiency.†

§ 9. Some, indeed, have taught otherwise; urging, not only that indifference to all tenets leaves reason free, but also that religious practice is of little use in order to discern truth and to guard against error. But it should be remembered that habitual practice forms the character; and, therefore, a defective practice forms a defective character. He who expects to succeed by defect, "sows the wind, and shall reap the whirlwind." When did the ancient Jews become corrupt in doctrine, but when they degenerated in their practice? When did the Church of Rome deviate from sound, scriptural principles, substituting the acts of councils and the mandates of presumptuous men for the oracles of God, but when the clergy and laity became voluptuous, "greedy of filthy lucre," receiving honour one from another on unauthorised grounds of distinction, and immoral in their conduct? When men misimprove or neglect the means of knowledge which God has afforded them, He gives them up to vile affections and judicial blindness, so that they take light for darkness and darkness for light. Their habits and characters being once formed under the guidance of

* Isa. xxviii. 9.

† "Propheta docet, doctores, sacerdotes, proceres populi, quorum erat tueri integritatem doctrinæ et conciliorum publicorum, adeo longe discessisse à tramite veri, ut plane inepti sint ad veram doctrinam salutis, fundatam in antiqua doctrina patriarchali et Mosaica, recte percipiendam et digerendam: esse enim doctrinam scholasticam ejus temporis, ad quod ipse respicit, doctrinam accommodatam ad *ingenia puerilia*, qualis fuit Pharisaica; non *masculam, solidam*, bene *cohærentem*, qualem oportet esse doctrinam veræ religionis, quæ homini adulto et exercito satisfactura sit: sed constare *præceptis* traditionum antiquarum nomine commendatis, independentibus et inter se neutiquam cohærentibus."—*Vitring.* in loc.

lust and passion, everything is viewed through a false medium, and the simplicity of pure truth has no attractive charms. Whatever, under the abused name of religion, administers to pride, ambition, and sensual pleasures, best accords with their acquired habits and depraved principles.

§ 10. As this representation is verified by every page of ecclesiastical history, in every period of the Church from the apostolic age to the present time, so it answers to the testimony of Scripture, and may without difficulty be accounted for. The love of honour and of pleasure, the love of power and of riches, weaken or exclude the love of God and benevolence to men. "If any man *love the world,* the love of the Father is not in him." "How *can* ye believe, who receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, *because their deeds are evil.* For every one that *doeth evil* hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." "And because *iniquity shall abound,* the love of many shall wax cold." Religious knowledge and practice have a reciprocal influence. Practical diligence, in God's appointed way, leads to spiritual wealth:—"The hand of the diligent maketh rich." And this wealth, when acquired, incites to further exertion, and to a more extended sphere of usefulness:—"He also that is *slothful* in his work is brother to him that is a great waster." He that would find the precious ore of knowledge must "search" and "dig" for it; not by perplexing speculations, so much as by "doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God;" not so much by the exertion of genius, as by scriptural self-denial,—by being ready to distribute and willing to communicate, by visiting the widow and the fatherless in their affliction, by persevering without weariness in well-doing, by always abounding in the work of the Lord, and by constantly cultivating a purity and simplicity of intention in all his actions. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." When men aim not at glorifying God, and neglect the Divine Teacher, they prepare themselves for strong delusions, for embracing error instead of celestial truth.

§ 11. They who *do evil,* and live in a carnal, worldly element, cannot bear the light of holy truth, and the doctrines which are

according to godliness; and, consequently, their search will be, if they search at all, after those principles which are most indulgent to the ways they like. Thus infidel principles are embraced by many, in order to obtain a quieter retreat from the reproaches of truth, the light of which they cannot or will not endure, because they are determined to make no costly sacrifices, to renounce no carnal indulgences: they resolve, in short, to retain the cargo, falsely valued by deceitful fancy, at the hazard of shipwreck; for them to receive gospel truth, would be to entertain that by which they are reproved and condemned. The characters just noticed exhibit, it is true, an extreme case; but the same considerations are applicable to many others who do not depart from truth to the same excess. Though denying the power of godliness, many retain the form of it from political or self-interested motives. They will be friendly to religion as long as religion subserves their particular purposes; but were it not regarded as a useful auxiliary, its intrinsic worth they would despise. In short, he who has most personal and practical religion, in the scriptural acceptation of the term, is the most likely, other things being equal, to arrive at the knowledge of the *whole truth* as it is in Jesus, because he has the fewest prejudices and hindrances to overcome.

§ 12. In the *second* place, cultivate Christian candour. An inquirer after truth, (and the same is applicable to a controvertist,) if he would prove successful, should be candid, open, and ingenuous. No concealments of the force of an objection, no evasion, no caricatures. Everything of this sort is mean and despicable. Recollect that the contest should be for truth, and not for superiority of skill. If consequences are deduced, let them be deduced honestly; if accusations are preferred, let them be substantiated. It discovers a total absence of generosity to make a man an offender for a word, when that word is no fair exponent of his real sentiments,—designedly to interpret an expression in a sense disapproved by him who employs it. Christian candour implies tenderness and sincere good-will, even towards those who treat our sentiments with contumely and defiance. Though firm in advancing an argument when that argument appears to be conclusive, it is very far from dogmatising without proof. Its prevailing desire is that unadulterated truth may prevail, that God may be glorified among men, and that their immortal welfare may

be promoted. It inculcates a humble and cheerful readiness to receive more light, and mingles prayers and devout aspirations for the spread of pure and undefiled religion.

§ 13. Christian candour, moreover, is utterly averse from crafty and politic manœuvres; it disdains to excite unfounded prejudices, nor will it implant a sting in the innocent by deciding on characters and sects in the mass. If conscious of superior evidence, it vaunteth not itself, nor behaveth itself unseemly. Though it censures real faults, it acknowledges all excellences, and wherever found, with gladness. It pours a tear over erring humanity; and while it admires the patience of heaven in bearing with its perversities, earnestly endeavours to imitate an example so exalted. Depraved and erroneous as men are, it is willing, like charity, to hope the best of all parties. It rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. Such is Christian candour. May the writer and the reader of these remarks anxiously covet a larger portion of it!

§ 14. In the *third* place, forbear to systematise without extensive information. Many detached parts of Scripture are plain. The well-disposed, without much controversial knowledge or skill in discriminating abstracted truths, may become wise unto piety and salvation. But there is no small danger in attempting to systematise on contracted or on false principles. To justify an endeavour to generalise detached sentiments, the subject should be viewed on all sides, in all its relations and connexions, its antecedents and consequences, its causes and effects. As one part of a religious system should not oppose another, so no part should oppose the sacred oracles. A theological theory which depends in a great measure on mere verbal criticisms for support, deservedly excites our suspicion. It is better to abide by the facts, the histories, the doctrines, and duties of religion as plainly revealed, without attempting a reconciliation of difficulties, or stating a systematic view of the whole, than to adopt for this purpose vague hypotheses incapable of proof, or uncertain conjectures, the pabulum of scepticism. Men may be good and useful Christians, though not versed in systems of divinity, and though destitute of a deep and critical knowledge of many particulars; but in order to correct the systems of others, these ought to be thoroughly known on the points of difference: and when an unfair statement of them is made, it follows, as a plain inference, that this must be

owing either to the want of information or of candour. Before we blame, let us be well informed.

§ 15. In the *fourth* place, inquire after truth and growing knowledge with a devotional temper. An undevout inquirer is almost sure of being disappointed, because he neglects the source of wisdom. True devotion calms the passions, and improves our love of truth. Connecting every object and event with God, as either appointing or permitting it, it is more likely to lead the mind to view every part of truth or of error in its proper cause. The devout mind has unfeigned pleasure in the Divine will, and prevailing desires to know it more fully, and therefore (*cæteris paribus*) there is greater probability of success. And it is worthy of observation, that the most useful men in the Church of Christ have been eminent for piety and a devotional spirit. But real devotion is not confined to set times and forms; the subject of it prays without ceasing, and evermore gives thanks to the Father of mercies. In every place, and at all seasons, he lifts up his heart to heaven without wrath or doubting. The Word of God is the treasury from whence he draws instruction; but he looks up for the Spirit of wisdom, that he may have an accurate conception of every part, not neglecting the subordinate helps which are placed within his reach. This method, pursued with diligence, will "give subtlety to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion;" and will prepare him "to understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings." "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding; for the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies; and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her; and happy is every one that retaineth her." "Buy the truth, and sell it not." "Delight thyself also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart."

§ 16. In having thus ventured to submit the foregoing observations to his younger brethren, (a considerable number of whom he has had the honour and the pleasure of instructing for the Christian ministry in the course of thirty years,) the writer hopes it is

needless for him to disclaim the imputation of considering himself as "having attained," or "being already perfect." Conscious of many deficiencies, and sensible that he has much to learn, he unaffectedly admits, that if in any part of this work he has failed in exemplifying the particulars recommended, he ought to be included in the number of those to whom the exhortations and directions are peculiarly applicable. Thus much, however, he must be permitted to declare, that as in the controversial part he has opposed no doctrine, advanced no sentiment, and adduced no argument which he had not deliberately weighed; so he has not ventured to suggest any advice which he is not conscientiously disposed to follow, or to recommend any temper of mind which he does not sincerely desire to cultivate.

SERMONS AND CHARGES.

SERMONS.

SERMON I.

ON THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGIOUS PRACTICE UPON OUR INQUIRIES AFTER TRUTH.

JOHN vii. 17.

"If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."

WHAT unspeakable obligations, my brethren, are we laid under, while we enjoy a Divine revelation! How desirable such a revelation is, not only the deplorable state of the heathen world, but also our own consciences, if impartially consulted, will testify. And the words I have now read seem to take it for granted, as indubitable, that mankind not only need, but have room to expect, a supernatural "doctrine from God." At no period of time hath God left Himself without witness in this respect; and while we adore the sovereign limitations with which it has been at times dispensed, we have great reason to bless the goodness which, in more than one period, has made it universal. But how interesting and solemn the thought, that it is a very possible case, (I speak not of professed infidels,) that some, at least, of a Christian audience may be "ever learning," and yet may "never come to the knowledge of the truth!" With deep concern we observe, that though men are informed of the most important doctrines revealed from heaven, of promises the most precious and encouraging, threatenings infinitely tremendous, and precepts the most wise and good, some will neither believe, repent, nor obey. The fact cannot be denied, however little it is lamented.

It is worthy of remark, that ignorance and disaffection, with respect to the real doctrines of Christianity, may be found not only in persons of very different acquirements and situations in life, but, what is more singular, in persons the features of whose moral characters are extremely dissimilar. The "pearl of great price" has been unvalued not only by Pharisees and Sadducees, by warring theologues and philosophical theorists, but by men of exemplary external conduct, of amiable tempers, of reputed virtue, benevolence, and charity, as well as by the licentious and the perverse.

May we not advance a step further, and say, that it is not impossible, nor perhaps uncommon, for *inquiring* minds to fail of success? For, in order to obtain the prize, to strive is not enough, except we strive lawfully. Do we anxiously and importunately surround the temple of heavenly truth seeking admittance? Be it known to us, that the appointed avenue is the "fear of the Lord." "My son, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the FEAR OF THE LORD, and," by that means, "find the" improved "knowledge of God." With this restriction, and in this order, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine."

In direct opposition to this appointed mode of seeking truth, a sentiment has been lately advanced, which, in proportion as it prevails, is of alarming consequence. It is this:—"The men who are most indifferent to the practice of religion will ever be the first to embrace a rational system of faith."* If this remark be just, how

* Mr Belsham's Discourse on the Importance of Truth, preached at the Old Jewry, to the Supporters of the New College at Hackney.—The passage more at large is as follows:—"Rational Christians, indeed, are often represented as indifferent to practical religion. It may, perhaps, be admitted, that there has been some plausible ground for the accusation. The men who are most indifferent to the practice of religion, and whose minds, therefore, are least attached to any set of principles, will ever be the first to see the absurdities of a popular superstition, and to embrace a rational system of faith. But not being properly influenced by it, their irregular conduct will, for a time, [how long?] disgrace their principles. But truth will gradually make its way by its native energy, and will, in the end, rise superior to every prejudice. Practical believers will at length open their eyes, [were they practical believers before their eyes were opened?] and feeling the benign influence of just and generous principles, they will demonstrate the excellence of their faith by the superior dignity and worth of their character," (p. 32,

shall we account for the rejection by the Jewish doctors and rulers of so rational a system as the gospel? Not, surely, because they were overburdened with "religious practice." But they had their prejudices in favour of superstition! Granted; but the question still remains, whence originated their prejudices against reason, wisdom, and goodness? Why so quarrel with the light of day, and the mirror of holiness? Were any people under heaven favoured like them as to religious principles and means of knowledge? How, then, came the sublime discoveries of revelation, with which they were daily conversant, to be less operative than superstition? Had they been possessed but of the smallest degree of genuine habitual goodness, and the exercise of real virtue, their superstitions would no more have been able to prevent their being attracted to Christ, His miracles and doctrine, than the intervention of the moon will prevent the gravitating tendency of the earth to the sun.

From the Jews let us turn to the Gentiles. Why did the philosophic Greeks account that foolishness which heaven pronounces wisdom? Was not this the grand cause, that, "when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened? Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." What has been, now is; and I suppose will continue to be, while human nature continues in a state of trial. In vain are men stunned with the proofs of miracles, or dazzled with the collected rays of evidence, while they remain indifferent to the performance of moral and religious duties. Those things, glorious as they are, can influence only as moral means. And what are means without a disposition to improve them? "Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?"* "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine."

When our Lord spoke these words, as He taught in the temple

2d Edition.) What a reflection is here implied on the most eminent reformers of every age, who were "the first to see the absurdities of a popular superstition," and the falsity of reigning principles! What a poor compliment to the religious character of Unitarian reformers! According to this account, one might be tempted to ask, Was it by being "indifferent to the practice of religion" that Mr B. was qualified to see and pronounce Calvinism to be "*gloomy* and *erroneous*, an *unamiable* and *melancholy* system?" Charity forbids us to think that he was thus qualified; and if so, by his own rule, he is no very competent judge, except he is pleased to adopt the alternative, that he is only the humble follower of more *sagacious* but *irreligious* guides.

* Prov. xvii. 16.

during the feast of tabernacles, the Jews were in a tumult of different thoughts about Him. "Some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people." His meek and unaspiring deportment, combined with His sublime instructions and incontestable miracles, presented a paradox to them. The more they reflected upon it, the more they were confounded. One part of His character was utterly incompatible with that of the heroic conqueror they expected for their Messiah; while the other shone irresistibly bright and convincing. Attending to the uncommon truths He advanced, and probably His peculiar manner of teaching, "the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"—that is, having never had a liberal education, which usually precedes such knowledge and address. To this our Lord replies, "My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me." What I teach claims a higher origin than you are willing to allow it. But to be thoroughly and profitably satisfied of this, He gives them to understand that they are to pay greater attention to the "will of God," in plainer matters. The disobedient were neither competent to pass sentence on what He taught, nor does He give them any promise of success. "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your heart, ye double-minded." Banish prejudice from your minds, and impurity from your conduct. While unfaithful and disobedient in what you profess, how can you expect an additional talent? Prodigal of past favours, and blind to your true interest, inattentive to the practice of religion, according to the means with which you have been favoured, you are not qualified to judge of heavenly wisdom. Your scruples concerning me and my doctrine spring from your vices, your pride, and hypocrisy. Whereas the truly teachable, they who cultivate a steady and tender regard to the mind of heaven in other things, may soon be resolved. For "if any man will [is deliberately resolved to] do His will, he shall know of the doctrine."

What I mean to advance from these words is—that, of all men, they are most likely, other things being equal, to know the true scheme of revealed religion, and, by parity of reason, the most important parts of it, who are most desirous and resolved to "*do the will of God;*" that is, to reduce what they already know to conscientious useful practice. In subserviency to this design, I shall offer some remarks on the "will of God," which is here proposed

as a primary object of our attention; and then consider what is required of us in reference to this primary object, here called the *doing* of it, as the appointed medium of improvement in religious knowledge; finally, I shall endeavour to examine, with a degree of strictness, the influence of religious practice on theological inquiries. When these points have been discussed, I hope the novel opinion before-mentioned will appear to have received a sufficient refutation.*

* To some, indeed, the attempt of a public exposure of it may seem unnecessary. And this would be the case, were we not, like the Athenians of old, addicted to idle speculations; seeking after new things rather than solid, and substituting any fancy, under the venerable name of *truth*, in place of a vigorous exertion in the field of duty. Sacred term! where is the folly, however extravagant, which thou hast not been compelled to serve? Yes, to find, and to boast that we have found, what we imagine has escaped the notice of the great and little vulgar, is far easier, and more flattering to our vanity, than assiduously to discharge the plain and substantial duties of religion.

We are liable to extremes on every side. Sometimes, an overstrained attachment to a few favourite branches of morality slackens our regard to others of equal if not superior moment; or, if our moral system is more comprehensive, we are tempted to forget the importance of certain principles which demand our cordial belief. At other times, the reciprocal influence of principles and practice is unobserved, or too much neglected. One while, we are inclined to think there is no connexion between them; and another while, that they operate mechanically, and not as moral means. But of all our eccentric opinions respecting knowledge and practice, I hardly know any one more singular, or of more pernicious tendency, (especially to theological students,) than that which I am now opposing.

Candour and justice forbid that we should ascribe to any intentions which they disavow. I would not, therefore, be understood to insinuate, that the gentleman to whose sentiments I allude intended by them to discountenance practical piety and devotion, and to compliment "indifference to religious practice" as possessed of superior excellence. Nevertheless, while we avoid imputing to the author of an opinion a bad design, it is but fair, and it may be useful, to examine its genuine tendency.

Let us suppose that a young student in divinity thoroughly imbibes the above sentiment, and acts according to it. He will, of course, look up to religious indifference as the school of sagacity; what proceeds from that quarter will be deemed more rational in religion than what comes from fervent piety and zealous exertion. The next step in this hopeful path is to associate with these sons of indifference, for the sake of improving by their sage observations. Now, as the example of those we admire is contagious, he will himself also very probably become "indifferent to religious practice." In due time he is called to settle over a people. He surveys his flock, and looks up with deference to the least practical of them for their judgment on any controverted point, and esteems it great happiness to enjoy their intimate acquaintance. The humble, the devout, the zealous will be shunned, and they, in their turn, will shun him; his religious performances, of course, will be thinly attended; the practical Christians are under the painful necessity of looking out for another minister; a division ensues. This, on the

I. Let our first attention be confined to some general remarks on the will of God; which is here proposed to us as an object of leading consideration, and with which our compliance is demanded. Jehovah's will is the supreme law, to which all men (and, I may add, all intelligent creatures) are bound to be strictly conformed, under the awful penalty of His displeasure.* It is not, however, the same to all beings, with respect to the particulars of its requirements, but, while it admits not the least moral obliquity, is adapted to their respective natures. This follows as a self-evident truth, except we should hold that the duties of an angel are required of a child. Nor are its obligations various with respect to different species only; for innumerable circumstances, with respect to beings of the same class, will constitute a diversity of obliga-

one hand, is ascribed to orthodox bigotry, and justified on the other by a respect to soundness in the faith and practical godliness. And what now remains, but that he justify his principles and conduct by calling the seceding party *enthusiasts*, and his own *rational Christians!* If the Divine hand overrule such confusions for final good, no thanks to those by whom offences come.

* This sentiment, which is demonstrably essential to all rational views of the Divine government, Mr B. seems to discard; where he classes it among some of the most hideous views of the Supreme Being that ever entered into the human mind:—"Let those whose feelings have dictated what they dare not avow,—that the formidable chimera of their imaginations, to which they have annexed the name of God the Father, was a merciless tyrant; who were secretly wishing that the reins of universal government were in better hands; who, with aching hearts, have viewed an omnipotent God, marking with a jealous and inexorable eye every instance of human frailty and folly,—let such declare the satisfaction they felt when brought out of this darkness into marvellous light," (p. 33.) The creature whose character answers to the first part of this description is certainly much to be pitied; and if ever he change his views, it will be hardly possible for him to do it for the worse. To him a single ray of light must needs appear marvellous, and the smallest grain of hope must administer high satisfaction.

But why join with these extravagances God's "marking with a jealous eye every instance of human frailty and folly?" These frailties and follies must of necessity be either right or wrong; there is in them either a breach of obligation or there is not; if there is not, what need of an apology, and why misname them? But if there is,—if every deviation from right reason, every act, sentiment, and disposition not conformable to the strictness of truth, is wrong,—is it not right that God should treat them as such? and is it not incompatible with infinite truth that He should treat them otherwise? If these things (no matter what they are called) are wrong, they are punishable; for to say that a thing is not punishable, in an accountable agent, is the same as to say that it is not wrong, and therefore right. And surely any degree of punishment from an omnipotent hand ought to be dreaded:—"I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him." We must adopt a very unusual process of reasoning before we can assert that *great* wrongs only are punishable.

tions. Natural capacity, means of information, favourable opportunities, and a thousand other things, must be taken into the account. Thus the will of God concerning men differs, with respect to the clearness of its intimations, according to the times and situations in which they are placed: as either without the pale of the Church, or within it,—as under an imperfect, or a complete economy.

The heathens, destitute of a Divine revelation properly so called, have only the volumes of creation, providence, and conscience, in which to seek their Maker's will. Accustomed to behold only the works of God, and to hear the indistinct whispers of conscience, their conclusions concerning right and wrong must needs be weak and unsteady. What direct knowledge they have is faint and confused; and as to the traditional information which any of them retain, it is so mixed with superstitions and absurdities, that it resembles rather a meteor which bewilders, than a lamp to enlighten their path. But imperfect as this natural light is, it is not to be slighted with impunity. It is the messenger of God; its rays, however weak, are sacred; and, therefore, to resist them must be criminal.

The Church of God was differently circumstanced under every dispensation. Superadded to the dictates of nature, He has shewed to His chosen people "what is good, and what He requires of them." His manner of instructing them, though various, carried its own evidence that it was Divine; and upon this strength of evidence, concerning things about which nature was silent, their obligation to obey was founded. During the early ages revealed truths were few, but remarkably comprehensive. The longevity of the patriarchs, and their traditional knowledge of important facts, sufficiently justify the wisdom of this procedure. Nor was the Divine will imparted to them so very sparingly as we may at first imagine. Of the original rectitude and foul apostasy of our first parents, the promise of a Deliverer from evil, the translation of Enoch, and the universal deluge; of God's distinguished favour to Noah, His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with the most remarkable incidents in their respective families,—of these particulars none could be ignorant, before they were recorded by Moses. Nor is it at all unlikely that oral tradition had preserved some instructive circumstances of these facts, which Divine wisdom thought fit afterwards to conceal. In the earliest ages, how-

ever, they had precious promises as the foundation of their hopes; and some rules, besides what are common to all men, to direct their worship and conduct. From the time of Moses to that of Malachi, the door of heaven, if I may so express myself, was seldom shut. The light of truth, from age to age, shone with increasing brightness. By accumulated miracles, and the remarkable fulfilment of various prophecies, preceding revelations became more manifest, both as to their reality and their import; and the will of God was rendered more intelligible. Their sacred books were multiplied; and hence, by comparing scripture with scripture, they had growing advantages to ascertain the meaning of the several parts, and the leading design of the whole.

Under the Christian dispensation the eternal God has revealed His will in a manner still more plain and ample. "In the latter days," at the close of the Mosaic and the commencement of the Christian economy, "He hath spoken to us by His Son." Truths hidden from former ages are "brought to light by the gospel." Here we have contained, and displayed at large, the plan of redemption, the government and grace of God, and the eternal destiny of man. Here the person and offices of the long-expected Deliverer, His fulness of grace, and His universal dominion, are fully exhibited. Here the aids and consolations of the Holy Spirit of promise are distinctly made known. In the New Testament not only are promises and threatenings, life and death, or, in its own peculiarly strong language, *salvation* and *damnation*, announced, but pressed upon the conscience by every consideration that is awful and engaging. What striking disclosures have we of the glories of heaven, and the terrors of hell, in connexion with the infinite perfections of Jehovah and our endless existence! It is natural to ask, what is the intention of all this? To what end has the great Jehovah been so peculiarly indulgent to the children of men? Why has He sent forth prophets and wise men, rising up early and going with their lives at stake to warn their fellow-sinners? Why has He from age to age raised up holy men to speak the words of truth and soberness as they were "moved by the Holy Ghost?" Why does the Eternal Father declare, that He is not ashamed to call himself "our God," and to prepare for us a city "which hath foundations?" To what purpose did the Son of God, being made flesh, dwell among us, and afterwards humble Himself as low as the cursed death of the cross? And, finally,

why are we favoured with the promise of an infallible Director to shew us "the way, the truth and the life?" All these wonderful discoveries concerning man concur to fix his attention on the "WILL OF GOD," that by *doing* it, he "may do well for himself."

When I speak of the *plainness* of gospel truths, I would not be supposed to mean that nothing connected with our future happiness is left under a veil. Far from it. Some things are but occasionally hinted at, which yet, in a sense, are very important. This remark is peculiarly applicable to the difficulty we find in accounting for the intimate nature, the manner of being, and circumstances, of certain objects, while their existence is clearly ascertained.* And in this respect the imperfection of our knowledge of Divine things bears a striking analogy to our difficulties in accounting for numberless appearances in the natural world. An inspired apostle was obliged to say, that he knew but "in part," and saw but "through a glass, darkly." Thus, whether we turn our views to the spiritual or natural world, a degree of obscurity awaits us. And why should this occasion discontent? Is not perfection in knowledge the exclusive prerogative of Deity? Whereas man is a creature of very limited powers in his best estate; and sin contracts them still more. In the present world both these causes, in a greater or less degree, co-operate in confining our knowledge within very narrow bounds. While our capacity is but small, compared with the extent of what may be known, our understanding is also darkened through our having lost, and not fully recovered, the "life of God." The one kind of imperfection is to follow us through every stage of existence; but from the other, those who are truly sincere may expect complete deliverance. However they may labour under perplexing and humbling uncertainties, respecting the precise will of their heavenly Father in some particulars, of this they are assured, that it is both His purpose and pleasure to "give them the kingdom." They are confident that the prayer of their High Priest was accepted, and will in due time be answered:—"Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold

* "Sicut legi divinæ obedire tenemur, licet reluctetur voluntas, ita et verbo Dei fidem habere, licet reluctetur ratio. Etenim, si ea duntaxat credamus quæ sunt rationi nostræ consentanea, rebus assentimur, non auctori."—*Bac. De Augm. Scient.*

my glory." In short, the curtain which conceals from us what is not proper for us to know, is at the same time well fitted to "hide pride from man." And while we should be cautious not to confound the reserves of sovereignty with our own criminal defects, of this we may be assured, that truths of essential importance to human happiness are so fully revealed, that there can be no danger of mistaking them, but from a culpable depravity of heart.

Having given this brief account of the will of God as made known to mankind; that is, the means He hath afforded them of knowing it as the very first object of their concern, as accountable creatures; let us next consider—

II. What is required of them, and of us particularly, in reference to this object. "If any man will *do* His will." Whatever is meant by *doing*, we see that it is the instituted way to knowledge. And elsewhere it is shewn to be a necessary way to happiness:—"Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." From what has been already said concerning men's various means of information, nothing can be plainer than that God's requirements of them must be various and proportionable. "Of him to whom much is given, much is required." Increasing light calls for increasing diligence and circumspection. It is required of those who have no revelation, that they suitably improve the means they possess; and who will deny, that in proportion as they do this, they do the will of God? But my present design is not to investigate the condition and obligations of heathens, but what God requires from *us*, as professors of revealed religion. The field before us is large, and the time allotted for this discourse limited. Let us, therefore, under this head, confine our attention to these two ideas—the receiving of promises, and the observance of moral precepts. Neglecting these, no one can be said to "do the will of God." He who lives in a practical disregard of either of them, is not, I insist, a competent judge of the Christian system, nor, by parity of reason, of its most interesting parts.

That the receiving of Divine promises, whenever they are exhibited to men, constitutes an essential part of their obedience, is, we would hope, sufficiently clear. On this, my brethren, is founded the justice of the Divine threatenings against unbelievers

with which the Scriptures abound. "Except ye believe," saith the prophet, "ye shall not be established." And when the evidence rises to the completeness of the gospel scheme, the penal sanction becomes more alarming:—"He that believeth not shall be damned." Is not this obligation to receive the gratuitous promise, as our only way of access to God, clearly implied in those commendations which God himself bestows on believers? Why was Abraham signalised as the "father of the faithful," and the "friend of God?" His high commendation was, that "he believed God." * And, indeed, when we consider the nature of the leading promises of revelation, it will abundantly appear how much our believing them is not only our duty but our privilege. For what, my brethren, are these "exceeding great and precious promises" but the vehicles of mercy from heaven? They are good news of great joy, and the savour of eternal life. In them we behold the foundation of all human hope; and without them we have no prospect but what is discouraging. Without the mercy they convey we are bound over to despair. We have nothing left but the "fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." By reason of sin we are all exposed to "punishment with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." †

In such a helpless and forlorn condition does the righteous Governor of the world find all the children of men. He saw them on the precipice of ruin, careless, nay, rebellious. He viewed the human system deranged, and verging towards endless perdition. But sovereign benevolence interposed. Divine mercy, prompted by essential goodness, and directed by unerring wisdom, presents to us "a Saviour who is Christ the Lord." "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." Here every one who believes with the heart finds a refreshing spring. "The eyes of his understanding being enlightened, that he may know what is the hope of his calling," he beholds a scene blessed and transport-

* "Si attente rem perpendamus, dignius quidnam est credere, quam scire, qualiter nunc scimus. In scientia enim mens humana patitur a sensu, qui a rebus materiatis resilit; in fide autem anima patitur ab anima, quæ est agens dignius. —*Bac. De Augm. Scient.*

† 2 Thess. i. 9.

ing. His hope begins to bud and blossom. The joy of the Lord becomes his strength; he rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory, and yet with trembling. Now his repentings are kindled together on account of his trangressions; he commiserates a disobedient world; he pours out supplications on their account from the abundance of his benevolent affections, and thinks no sacrifice too great to promote their eternal welfare. "The love of Christ constraineth him, because he thus judges, that if one died for all, then were all dead." If the lamp of his devotion languishes, he has access by faith to the inexhaustible promise for the sacred oil. Refreshed and affected with the view of infinite benignity and love, the spontaneous language of his heart is, "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever!" "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"

To every true believer of the promise Christ is precious. The spirit of the promises, as of the prophetic writings, is the testimony they bear to Jesus. In Him prophecies and promises all centre; by Him they were fulfilled and ratified. On His mediatorial work the ministry of reconciliation is founded; for "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." "Other foundation" of hope, righteousness, and holiness, of true religion and eternal life, "can no man lay than" that which is laid in Zion, "Jesus Christ." One grand design of Christ's mission was to bear witness to the promise:—"Jesus answered, To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto *the truth*. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." * As if He had said, "For this purpose am I come in the flesh, to announce the design, to fulfil the contents, and to confirm the reality of the promise made to the fathers; every believer of the promise receiveth my message." This, I apprehend, is the genuine and direct import of the word *truth* in this place—the fidelity of God in the promise.† With this agrees that passage of St Paul:—

* John xviii. 37.

† The above passage is Mr B.'s text; on which he observes:—"The Son of God tells us that to bear witness to truth was the chief end of His birth and mission into the world," (p. 1.) He afterwards defines the word:—"*Truth* is a word of various import. It is sometimes used to express the real existence, properties, powers, connexions, and relations of things; it more frequently signifies the conformity of our ideas to the reality of things, or the conformity of our

"Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy."* The promise was concerning spiritual redemption and eternal life in the Messiah; to testify this by His ministry and wonderful works, and to ratify it with His death, was one distinguished end of His mediatorial work. "This is the *record*, that God hath given to us" the promises of "eternal life, and this life is in his Son." "He that believeth not God hath made him a liar." But, on the contrary, he who believes the promise and record of the God of truth "doeth His will."

The other idea proposed, as implied "in doing the will of God," is the observance of moral precepts. Receiving the promises, indeed, is a part of moral duty; but the nature of the obedience in the one case and the other is so different, that the distinction, *faith* and *practice*, or *believing* and *doing*, has been generally, and not improperly admitted. But that any should carry the distinction so far as to hold, that faith in no sense is a duty, must surely be very incautious. Perhaps the different acceptations of the term "faith" may not be duly regarded. Nothing is plainer than that it signifies in the New Testament sometimes a *Divine gift*, and at other times a *human duty*. The former, it is true, is essentially different from all moral obedience, and properly contrasted with it; but the latter is a capital branch of that obedience. The one is a Divine influx, producing a disposition; the other is the exercise of that disposition when produced. Now the obedience which is paid to what are commonly denominated moral precepts differs from the obedience of faith or believing, as the receiving of benefits on the Divine testimony differs from a suitable improvement of them. Having briefly attended to the former of these, let us now advert to the latter.

What, then, is the observance of moral precepts? It is conformity to the rule of right. It is a compliance with the will of the righteous and holy Governor of the universe, by whatever means that will is made known, respecting things antecedently right.†

words to our ideas, of our declarations to our purposes, and of our actions to our promises," (p. 9.) Query: Is what our Lord calls "the truth" at all included in this definition?

* Rom. xv. 8, 9.

† I say antecedently right; for a constitution of created things being supposed, the obligation results (in moral as distinguished from positive precepts) from the

It is, in short, to discharge the obligations of universal justice; whereby we give to creatures what is their due, and render to God the things that are *His*. Hence arises supreme love to God, seeing He infinitely surpasses in excellence and worthiness all competitors. It is the dictate of justice and plain honesty, that we should give to the God of love, the source of all moral beauty, a greater share of our affection than to any other object. All indifference towards Him is an egregious violation of right. Again; nothing is more just and becoming than that we should in all things submit our wills to that of God, and devote ourselves to the Divine providence and pleasure universally. Nor is it anything more than common justice, that we should warmly feel, and devoutly express, our gratitude to heaven for its innumerable benefits.

This is the voice of nature and of reason. And in perfect harmony with it is the voice of revelation:—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment; and the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Here lies the principle of all acceptable obedience, and the essence of all solid virtue. For the neglect of such duties, no attention to positive rites, or external forms of worship, in any age of the world, would atone. And we may add, with unabated confidence, that no scrupulous discharge of *other* duties, be they what they may, no self-denial, be the sacrifice ever so costly, will be now admitted as a substitute for love, supreme to God, and unfeigned to man,—for "doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with our God." In a word, such piety alone is a sufficient test of regard for truth and goodness. And I will add, that the man who lives in a state of indifference towards God, is an enemy to goodness and truth, to justice and to reason. He is condemned by the law of heaven; he is condemned by his own conscience; nay, he is condemned by the savage idolater. What! to be indifferent towards infinite benevolence and mercy! It is reprobated by every feeling

constituted relations; nevertheless, more remotely, the mere will of God gave birth to that constitution itself. Prior to this, no standard of right and wrong can be assigned but the Divine essence.

The ultimate standard, therefore, of moral rectitude is God Himself, in His infinite being and necessary perfections; the intermediate, His sovereign pleasure, ever conformable to Himself; and the proximate, our appointed relation to Him and other beings.

of humanity, by every obligation in life, as well as by the Supreme Judge of all equity.

The morality of the gospel, though radically the same, is beautifully expanded into a thousand delightful forms. Permit me to give you a few specimens:—"And besides all this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity." * Our blessed Lord hath taught us, both by precept and example, not only to cultivate meekness and lowliness of heart, earnest prayer and warmest gratitude to God, and all kind offices to friends, but also to "love our enemies," to "bless them that curse" us, to "do good to them that hate" us, and "pray for them who despitefully use and persecute" us.† In the New Testament, every moral duty, whether personal or relative, whether incumbent on us as members of the Church or of the state, in private or in public life, is enjoined with wonderful plainness and brevity, and supported by the most cogent reasons: —"Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. Rejoice evermore; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Abstain from all appearance of evil." ‡ With what fulness, conciseness, and pathos, does the apostle Paul exhort the Romans: —"Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one towards another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate." § This is the sublime morality of the gospel, and which is so very imperfectly exemplified in modern times. Where do we meet with that fervour of love, that profound humility, that melting gratitude, that sweet meekness of conduct, and those disinterested exertions which Christianity requires, and for which we have the most powerful motives?

* 2 Pet. i. 5–7.
† Matt. v. 44.
‡ 1 Thess. v. 14, &c.
§ Rom. xii. 9, &c.

What is all scientific knowledge, whether philosophical, political, or theological, compared with such evangelical charity! "Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of him." *

But here it may be asked, Since the best of our *doings* are attended with much imperfection; since faith and love, and the required expressions of them, cannot for one day, or perhaps in a single instance, bear the test of rigorous examination; what is that smallest degree with which is connected, according to the text, freedom from all essential mistakes in religious inquiries? The question is too complicated to admit of an accurate discussion in a few words, to which I am now confined; but my answer in brief is this: The primary and fundamental qualification is the regeneration of the heart. There is not, perhaps, anything uttered by the Saviour more plainly, or more solemnly, than the necessity of our being "born from above;" or, as He explains the phraseology, "born of the Spirit." It implies a change of disposition effected by God himself. If the heart be not made good and honest by Divine grace, for receiving the seed of truth, no fruit of holiness and virtue can be expected to spring up. "The preparations of the heart in man are from the Lord." If from the tree you expect good fruit, let the tree itself be made good. But does not this account tend to retard our diligence in the use of means? Not in the least; but rather to quicken it. Drawing us to pray, it draws us unto God. This is God's appointed plan; He tells us of our impotency, that under a humbling sense of it we may seek His grace; and this keeps up the pious breathings and fervour of true devotion. When our Lord recommends to His followers importunity in prayer, how does He enforce it? Not by complimenting their natural ability, but by shewing them their need of supernatural influence. "Work out your own salvation," saith the Scripture, "with fear and trembling;" but know this, moreover, that of yourselves you are insufficient, not only for *doing*, but even for *willing* what is right; "for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure." In short, this principle of renovation is become to man in his present state indispensably necessary: and such a disposition as that which is effected by it is equitably and strictly required. Possessed of this,

* 1 Cor. viii. 1–3.

we have a preservative from all essential mistakes; and in proportion as we do the will of God, (other things being equal,) we shall know whether a doctrine be of God or of men, and, by parity of reason, what is the true system of the Bible, and the most important parts of it. We are now led—

III. To examine the *influence* of religious practice on theological inquiries. Our present concern is not about natural and political, but moral and spiritual truth—the real system of Christianity. All truth is valuable; but the knowledge of natural truths may subsist in a high degree, without a spark of virtue and solid happiness. From "sublime speculations which have astonished and illuminated the world," we cannot infer that the "eye is single, and the whole body full of light." Persons may be wonderful proficients in philosophy and politics, while utter strangers to genuine theology;* may be "heroes of science, champions of truth, of liberty and virtue," and yet—"deny the Lord that bought them." "If any man will do God's will, he shall know of the" Christian "doctrine;" he shall know the truth, and it shall make him free. But let no other flatter himself that he has any real acquaintance with Divine truth.

Here, then, we might safely lodge an appeal, with any impartial and competent judge, respecting the point in issue. Who are the persons, among those to whom a revelation from heaven is *first* proposed, most likely to receive and understand it? They who wilfully and habitually shut their eyes against the light they enjoy, or they who are most conscientious in attending to it? Who are the persons, among those to whom a *partial* revelation has been given, best qualified to understand and approve a subsequent revelation? They who humbly, gratefully, and diligently improve former truths, promises, and precepts, encouragements and threatenings, or they who act a contrary part? Who are the persons, among those who enjoy the *last* display of mercy, we might reasonably expect to obtain a just and consistent knowledge of the doctrine of God, as a general system, or in its most interesting

* "Si eam (scil. theologiam sacram, sive inspiratam) tractare pergamus, exeundum nobis e navicula rationis humanæ, et transeundum in ecclesiæ navem, quæ sola acu nautica divina pollet, ad cursum recte dirigendum. Neque enim, sufficient amplius stellæ philosophiæ, quæ hactenus præcipue nobis affulserunt."—*Bacon*, ut supra.

parts? They who are intoxicated with sensual pleasures, immersed in worldly pursuits, swollen with pride, and panting after fame; or the temperate, the humble, the unassuming?—the men of Laodicean spirit, "who are most indifferent to the practice of religion;" or the men who are "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord?" To what description of men was the promise made of the Messiah's benign influences? Jehovah himself replies:—"To you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." Who is rewarded by an additional talent,—he who buries the one intrusted to him, or he who improves it? The rule is decisive:—"To him that hath shall be given; but from him that hath not shall be taken away that which he thinketh he hath." In a word, who bids fairest to know the true analogy of faith, and the general tendency of revealed truth,—that invaluable golden thread which runs through the whole of its texture,—from what source of authority or mercy the several parts flow, and what is their genuine effect? Our Lord solves the interesting question:—"He who doeth the will of God." It is manifest that what I have been now advancing refers to the order of means, and the moral dependence of causes and effects, and not to the procedure of sovereignty. As a sovereign, God is superior to means; and it would be easy to produce numerous instances, in which the current of nature, though very strong against the truth, has been turned out of its channel by a sovereign hand. Instantaneously, and in defiance of all attempts to the contrary, the most prejudiced mind has been conquered, and made the sacred receptacle of truth and goodness. But what I all along refer to is, not how men come by rectified dispositions, but what is the genuine tendency of certain dispositions and habits towards moral truth.

Now reflect, my brethren, is it probable that they should be successful in their choice, when truth and real good are proposed to them, who are accustomed to disregard the promise and the oath of Jehovah? After all the condescending and wonderful steps taken to engage our reception of free promises of pardon, peace, and salvation out of the "unsearchable riches of Christ," is it likely, while we remain indifferent to these, that we should be competent judges of gospel doctrines at large? Is it to be supposed that the Jews, had they received the promises as Abraham did, would have rejected Christ and His doctrine? The fact is, that when the fault lies in the disposition and habits of the mind,

the heart is deceived. All the mental powers, however sublime and comprehensive in natural knowledge, are morally corrupted. And when that is the case, the greatest wisdom may appear folly, and the most glorious truths mean and contemptible. "For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." *

All revelation, my brethren, is a "doctrine according to godliness." And the character of the whole must belong to the several parts. Proceeding from God, and the effect of His infinite wisdom and benevolence, its general aim must needs be conformable to these perfections. Whatever else it aims at, we are sure it must include this—to make us holy as well as happy, both in this world and to eternal ages. Whatever tends to overturn this maxim tends to overturn the doctrine of God, to undermine the very foundations of Christianity. Now, I assert that, in proportion as a man's practice is not according to godliness, or, which is the same thing, continues "indifferent to the practice of religion," he is not qualified to pass a right judgment upon Christianity. Not accustomed to do the will of God which is holy, and which requires holiness in all manner of conversation, how is it possible for him to embrace the truth which flashes condemnation into his conscience?

Let us appeal to experience. Every one knows that acts of any kind repeated introduce habits of the same kind. Irreligious acts, therefore, repeated and persisted in, form irreligious habits. I appeal to your consciences, you who are reclaimed from the dominion of these habits, for the truth of this remark. You can easily apply it to a thousand facts: particularly to prayer being restrained, and meditation on the Scriptures omitted; to bodily indulgence, and the repetition of sensual gratifications; and especially "indifference" towards God. The omission of duty having become habitual, it is but an easy step to slight transgressions; and, from repeated commissions of these less notorious sins, a habit is forming for those that are presumptuous.

* 1 Cor. i. 19–21.

Moreover; when habits are established by practice, they necessarily beget a class of prejudices in favour of those habits. The mind of man is ever active. The passions in no stage of life, nor in any situation, are free from interest and attachment. If released from one object, it is because they are engaged to another. To suppose any person, be his education, sentiments, or line of life what they may, to be indifferent to moral objects is contrary to fact, and a solecism in morals. If men, therefore, are not religious in their practice and habits, *indifferent* to the principles of religious truth they cannot be. Deliberate habitual human conduct is a stream which proceeds from the state of the heart; and as the stream is, such is the fountain. Then alone is the tone of the mind in unison with truth and virtue, when productive of virtuous and religious practice. He who committeth sin habitually is the servant of sin. And he cannot "serve two masters;" if he love the one, and serve him, he must needs offend the other. But can any one be the servant of sin, without being disaffected, in the same degree, to truth and holiness? And how can he embrace that to which he is at the same time disaffected? In a word, how is it possible for a man to *serve sin*,—by being disaffected to objects of infinite magnitude and eternal consequence, but active enough towards those which are comparatively trifling,—and not be an enemy to Christ and His gospel? He who "gathereth not with Christ scattereth abroad." If no active friend to religion and goodness, it is because he is already biased to evil. And "every one that doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." If men's "deeds are evil," is it any wonder that they "love darkness rather than light," error in preference to truth?

In proportion, therefore, as any doctrine is of a reforming tendency, it will be hated by the evil-doer. The system he has erected, (for evil-doers have their systems,)—the system he has erected is in danger of being undermined; and the defence of his acquired habits is become self-defence. His prejudices are alarmed, and stand prepared to oppose the doctrine which threatens to disturb those indulged habits. Let him, therefore, who would reform his habits, begin with reforming those acts which beget and support them; let him—attentive to his past crimes, and the depravity of his heart, and to that mercy which is higher than the heavens—"break off his sins by repentance, and his iniquities by

turning to the Lord." Let him "put away the evil of his doings," "cease to do evil," and "learn to do well." Till this is laid as the foundation of our inquiries, our superstructure will be deformed and unsafe; and our speculations about Divine truth will remain covered with impenetrable darkness.

On the contrary, he who "doeth the will of God" shall succeed in his inquiries. His devout regard to the Divine will in repeated acts, begets a habit of propriety and goodness. Whenever truth is proposed to such a person, his mind will fall in love with it. Truth incorporates itself in his mind, and nourishes what it did not produce. Being a suitable means, it will improve a good disposition, though it cannot give it existence. Before any one does, in fact, render acceptable obedience, his heart must be virtuously disposed; for the deed is of the nature of the disposition. Hence it necessarily follows, that the disposition, or the radical state of the heart, and the acquired habits, proceed from different sources. The latter take their rise from actions, the former flows directly from the eternal source of good. Truth will not, never did, nor can, form the first principle of goodness and virtue in the heart, by any "native energy" of its own; any more than precious seed will alter the nature of the soil, or than a scion engrafted on a stock will alter its nature. Food, when received by a living body, prolongs life and imparts vigour; but can food beget a faculty of digesting in a body which has lost it? What the apostle says of the law, is equally applicable to truth—it is become "weak through the flesh." The gracious man, and he alone, "doeth truth;" and, therefore, he alone "cometh to the light."

Be not deceived: "evil communications corrupt good manners." He who "doeth not God's will" is, for that very reason, prepared for rejecting every doctrine which enjoins purity. He whose practice is carnal has a carnal mind; and you know who hath declared that the "carnal mind is enmity against God:" it is "not subject to the law of God," (nor, for the same reason, qualified to receive His gospel,) nor indeed can be, being "spiritually discerned." Look to Him, therefore, who caused the "light to shine out of darkness," that He may shine into your minds, and give you "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face," that is, in the person, "of Jesus Christ," who is the resplendent image of the invisible God. Your mind is "darkened," being "alienated from the life of God," till the Holy Spirit of promise

shew you the truth as it is in Jesus. "Flesh and blood," human nature unrenewed, cannot help you to this necessary knowledge, to any saving purpose, notwithstanding all the efforts of intellect and science. And as your understanding is darkened, so your will is inclined to evil, till you are "made willing in the day of God's power." While your heart is "a heart of stone," and not "a heart of flesh," what impression can be made upon it? But the God of grace can give you a happy exchange; and when He puts His fear and His love in your hearts, with what affection, humility, and meekness will you receive the "engrafted word," which is able to save your souls! While the pride of native power and dignity remains unsubdued, prejudices are vigilant, the passions are roused at the very mention of the doctrine of the cross; but when it is given you on the behalf of Christ *to believe*, a crucified Redeemer—"delivered for your offences, and raised again for your justification"—will appear, as indeed He is, "the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

Thus we have attempted to explain the text, and to enforce the doctrine of it. Nothing I believe has been advanced, I am sure nothing was intended, to damp the spirit of free inquiry: my general aim is rather to promote it. But as method is essential to success, it behoves all concerned (and who is not concerned?) to fix upon the best. Wisdom itself has condescended to point it out, and fruitless must be the toil of those who neglect it. From the whole we may infer—

First, The great importance of religious practice. To know the truth is a great privilege, but to practise what we know is our blessedness. "If ye know these things, *happy* are ye if ye do them." On the importance of religious principles it is the office of a Christian minister frequently to insist. He cannot expect a future harvest of holiness and usefulness who neglects to sow good seed; but if these principles do not prove operative, if knowledge be not reduced to affection and practice, the Christian character is but half formed. Practice is the end of all revealed truths. What is the design, for instance, of Scripture facts? While they demand the assent of the understanding, they also claim the exercise of the moral feelings. Does any action bear the mark of mistake in judgment, or impropriety in human conduct? It was recorded to excite caution, diffidence, humble prayer, and gratitude to Him

who makes us differ. Its language is, "Be not high-minded, but fear. Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Is any human character pointed out as praiseworthy? It is not to extort a transient admiration of it, but that we, as circumstances allow, may go and do likewise. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things;" that is, revolve them in your mind, with an endeavour to acquire and practise them. If infinite mercy condescends to address us in promises, it is not that we may merely speculate upon them, but that we may believe them. Are the counsels of love opened, and the riches of grace displayed? It is that we may adore, love, and obey. Does God add oaths to promises, and His seal to both? It is to encourage our access to Him, to make us a willing, a grateful and obedient people. When laws are given us, as the subjects of God's moral government, is it merely that we may know, or is it not chiefly that we may obey them? He "who knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to His will, shall be beaten with many stripes."

To speculate about religious truth, if unattended with holiness of heart and life, is to look for good seed, while neglecting the choice of soil and the labour of cultivation. Vain the depth of philosophic researches, and the pomp of eloquence; vain the flight of genius, and the pride of science; vain are the most elaborate investigations of truth itself, while the practice of piety is despised or neglected. Criticism may surprise us with learned ingenuity, or metaphysical subtlety with plausible hypothesis; but the inquirer, if not "a doer" of the will of God, will have no greater security against moral error than the most illiterate mechanic. Let this be firmly rooted in our minds, on the authority of Christ, and as perfectly consistent with reason and fact, that a compliance with the will of Heaven in plain things is the safest way in which a religious inquirer can travel. Next to the promised "unction from the Holy One," it is the surest guide to the more sacred recesses of the temple of Divine truth.* This leads me to remark—

* I beg leave to insert and recommend here the following plain but expressive language of Dr Ralph Cudworth, the celebrated author of "The True Intellectual System of the Universe:"—"We have much inquiry concerning knowledge in

Secondly, and to conclude, How amiable are the Divine goodness and equity in fixing on the practice of what we know as a guide to truth and to happiness! Mortifying it may be to human

these latter times. The sons of Adam are now as busy as ever himself was about the 'tree of knowledge' of good and evil, shaking the boughs of it, and scrambling for the fruit; whilst, I fear, many are too unmindful of the 'tree of life.' There may be many that speak of new discoveries of *truth*, of dawnings of gospel-light,—and no question but God hath reserved much of this for the very evening and sunset of the world, for 'in the latter days knowledge shall be increased,'—but yet I wish, whilst we talk of *light*, and dispute about *truth*, we could walk more as 'children of the light.' If St John's rule here (1 John ii. 3, 4) be good, we must not judge of our *knowing* of Christ by our skill in books and papers, but by our 'keeping His commandments.' The greatest part of the world, whether learned or unlearned, think that there is no need of purging and 'purifying their hearts' for the 'right knowledge' of Christ and His gospel; but though their lives be never so wicked, their hearts never so foul within, yet they may know Christ sufficiently out of their treatises and discourses—although our Saviour prescribed His disciples another method to come to the right knowledge of Divine truths, by doing of God's will: 'He that will do my Father's will,' saith He, 'shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.' Christ came not to possess our brains only with some cold opinions, that send down nothing but a freezing and benumbing influence upon our hearts. He is the best Christian whose heart beats with the truest pulse towards heaven; not he whose head spinneth out the finest cobwebs. I wish it were not the distemper of our times to make men solicitous about this and that opinion, whilst in the meantime there is no care taken about keeping Christ's commandments, and being renewed in our minds according to the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness.

"It was well spoken by a noble philosopher, 'Without virtue, God is an empty name;' so without obedience to Christ's commandments, without the life of Christ dwelleth in us, whatsoever opinions we entertain of Him, Christ is only *named* by us, He is not *known*. I speak not here against a free and ingenuous inquiry into all truth, according to our several abilities and opportunities; I plead not for the enthralling our judgments to the dictates of men; I do not disparage the natural improvement of our understanding by true knowledge: but the thing I aim against is, the dispiriting the life and vigour of our religion by dry speculations, and making it nothing but a mere dead skeleton of opinions; and misplacing all our zeal upon these, which should be spent to better purpose upon other objects. Knowledge, indeed, is the thing far more excellent than riches, outward pleasures, worldly dignities, or anything else besides holiness; but yet our happiness consisteth not in it, but in a Divine temper and constitution of soul which is far above it. But it is a piece of that corruption that runneth through human nature, that we naturally prize knowledge more than holiness. We think it a gallant thing to be fluttering up to heaven with our wings of knowledge and speculation; whereas the highest mystery of a Divine life here, and of perfect happiness hereafter, consisteth in nothing but mere obedience to the Divine will. Happiness is nothing but that inward sweet delight that will arise from the harmonious agreement between our wills and God's will. There is nothing contrary to God in the whole world, nothing that fights against Him, but *self-will*."—*Dr Cudworth's Sermon, preached before the House of Commons.*

pride, but it is matter of eternal thankfulness to the pious poor and unlearned. "I thank thee, O Father," says Christ, "Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight." * Thus also the apostle of the Gentiles expresses himself:—"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, ... *that no flesh should glory in his presence.*" †

* Matt. xi. 25, 26. † 1 Cor. i. 26, 27, 29.

SERMON II.

ON THE CHRISTIAN'S REASONS FOR GLORYING IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

GALATIANS vi. 14.

"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

WHEN the human mind is deeply impressed with any subject, it finds itself powerfully prompted, as opportunity offers, to communicate its feelings. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." But, my brethren, how frequently has this innocent principle of our nature been abused!* What is there so base, of which many, who ought to know better, will not scruple to make their boast? While others, though they can despise meaner things, have no doubt but their riches, their power, and especially their wisdom, may be gloried in. Yet this species of boasting is the more dangerous, because so little suspected.

Very important and seasonable, therefore, is that caution given us by the prophet:—"Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord who exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord."† With direct reference to this Divine injunction, the apostle Paul, after shewing in strong colours the vanity of boasted science, compared with the true knowledge of Christ, addresses the Corinthians in the following words:—"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He

* Phil. iii. 18, 19. † Jer. ix. 23. 24.

that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."* While the men of the world, the men of scientific wisdom, and the bigoted admirers of external modes of religion, betray their predilections for their respective objects of pursuit, and glory in the possession of them, every well-informed Christian, with this inspired apostle, is ready to declare after mature thought, and with unreserved cordiality, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ;" for, by so doing, I glory in the Lord.

The views and feelings of men have been often found, in the different periods of their own lives, directly opposite. This operation is remarkably exemplified in the character and conduct of the apostle Paul. Before his conversion, great was the opposition he made to Christ and His disciples; because "he verily thought with himself that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth."† His reverence for the Mosaic institutions, the prejudices of education, the want of pomp and splendour in the religion of Jesus, which that of Moses possessed in a high degree,—these, and similar influences, through defect of a better light and a rectified judgment, conspired to make him a determined bigot in the Jewish, as opposed to the Christian cause. Not satisfied with consenting to the murder of Stephen, "he made havock of the church;"‡ his fiery zeal not merely blazed forth into "threatenings," but proceeded even to violence and meditated "slaughter."§

Such was the character of Paul while a votary to the Jewish religion. But being a chosen vessel destined for high honour, the eye of mercy was upon him. He was informed from heaven, by an authority and evidence not to be disputed,‖ that he was in a dangerous error; that he must immediately desist from his unhallowed enterprise, and preach that faith which he was attempting to destroy. These are his own emphatical expressions addressed to the Galatian church:—"Ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it; . . . . but when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood."¶ How he was employed after his conversion, we are in-

* 1 Cor. i. 30, 31. † Acts xxvi. 9. ‡ Acts viii. 1, 3.
§ Acts ix. 1, 2. ‖ Acts ix. 3–8. ¶ Gal. i. 13, 15, 16.

formed by St Luke in these expressive terms:—"Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus; and straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God." *

Being thus illuminated by Divine favour, this distinguished preacher of the gospel no longer gloried in his former connexions and prerogatives, his descent and learning, his reputation and hopes of growing fame, his goodness or abilities; but the language of his heart was this:—"What things were gain to me, those have I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I do count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, *being made conformable unto his death.*" † Similar sentiments of devotedness to Christ, as crucified for the sins of men, and effecting the noblest plan of mercy, he expresses in the clearest terms in very numerous places of his epistles. Our text may be considered as an epitome of the whole:—"God forbid [*μὴ γένοιτο*, "let it not be," "far be the thought"] that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The doctrine which I consider as principally intended in these words is opposed from numerous and opposite quarters. These it would be needless for me now to enumerate; you are well aware of them yourselves; and many of you, I am persuaded, are well "established in the present truth." Some, however, especially those who are in the younger part of life, may find profit in attending to what I have to offer on the subject. May the blessing of God accompany His own truths, while I shall endeavour to shew what the apostle means by "glorying in the cross of Christ," and what reasons he had for so doing! When these points have been discussed, I presume it will appear that the apostle's unparalleled attachment to the doctrine of the cross was not without just cause; and that those ministers of the gospel, and Christian churches, who follow his steps in this particular, are found in the path of duty and true happiness.

* Acts ix. 19, 20. † Phil. iii. 7–10.

I. What does the apostle mean by "glorying in the cross of Christ?" For a proper solution of this question, it is of importance to observe that the scriptural expression, "the cross of Christ," is figurative. By not attending to this obvious idea, the most absurd consequences have been deduced. Hence have the artful and interested, by obtruding on the credulous devotees of the Roman Church the literal acceptation of the term "cross," accumulated the gain of falsehood by selling pretended relics. Hence also the extensive use of crucifixes, with the superstitious practice of priests and people in marking themselves or each other in the form of a cross.* What the apostle evidently means by "the cross of Christ," is, *Christ himself as crucified.* For as, by the same figure of speech, a cup denotes the wine contained in the cup, so the cross denotes Christ himself on the cross. It is observable that the metonymical connexion is not formed between Christ and some exalted state, as possessing glory, or exercising power; but his chief boasting was in His *crucifixion.* Hence it follows, unless we deny to the apostle the exercise of common sense, as well as conclusive reasoning, that the circumstance of His being crucified was of the greatest moment; including what may be fairly termed the basis of human hope, and of the Christian's triumph. To deny this, is in fact to say, that the apostle misunderstood his commission, and mistook the source of his own happiness.† But if his glorying was well founded, we may conclude that, in what he calls the "cross of Christ," he beheld a singular instance of *humiliation,* and complete *atonement.*

In the first place, the apostle, while glorying in the cross, must have observed in the Redeemer a degree of *humiliation* wonderful in itself, and highly interesting to men. If this be not the case, how can we account for the force and emphasis of his language? But if it be, which cannot be disputed, we are necessarily directed to some wonderful prior dignity; for where there is no dignity, there can be no condescension. Discarding the idea of pre-existent dignity, what sufferable sense can be made of these words:—"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye

* In some parts of Wales, it is very common to this day, even among Protestants, when one observes another about doing anything rash or dangerous, to exclaim, *Ymgroesa,* "Cross thyself!" as if the danger could be charmed off by that means.

† 1 Cor. ii. 1, 2.

through his poverty might be rich?" * Was Jesus ever, in this life, otherwise than poor? "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." † When, therefore, was He "rich," if not in a state of prior existence? To suppose that there is not a distinct opposition between the terms "rich" and "poor," is surely contrary to all just rules of sacred criticism, and nugatory in the extreme.

Hear the same apostle's address to the Colossians, respecting the Son of God:—"In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature, [*πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως, the first-producer of the whole creation:*] ‡ for by him were all things created, § that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is *before all things, and by him all things consist.*" ‖ Is the language here employed any way suited to describe the character of one who had no existence prior to His humanity? It appears from the words,—if words have any meaning,—that it was the apostle's decided belief, that He who, in the form of man, shed His blood for our redemption, existed, in another form, before all worlds; and that He was possessed of dignity by us inconceivable; for in that prior form He "created all things."

This sentiment was not hastily adopted, or suited to any singular case of the Colossian church. The same sentiment, in language equally strong, is held forth in his address to the Philippians:—"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being [*ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ*] in the form of God, thought it not robbery ¶ to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation,

* 2 Cor. viii. 9. † Matt. viii. 20.

‡ "Τίκτω, 'pario,' (a quo *πρωτότοκος*) generatim notat *productionem rei*—ita competit tam maribus, quam fœmellis, et sic quoque usurpatum legitur apud Homerum, Odyss. ξ. 174; o. 249. *Πρωτότοκος* generatim significat, quicquid in unaquaque re primum est, et alia antecedit. Inde *ἀνθρωποπαθως* tribuitur Christo, Col. i. 15. Ubi dicitur Primogenitus omnis creaturæ, quia primas habet præ omnibus creaturis, opifex, conditor et dominus earum, ante quas omnes extitit," &c.—*Stockii Lexic.*

§ "To interpret this, as the Socinians do, of the new creation in the spiritual sense, is so unnatural, that one could hardly believe, if the evidence were not so undeniably strong, that any set of learned commentators could fall into it."—*Doddr.* in loc. ‖ Col. i. 14–17.

¶ How the phrase, *οὐχ ἁρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο*, ought to be rendered, does not

[*ἀυτὸν ἐκένωσε,* emptied himself,*] and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, [*ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν,*] † and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." ‡ Does not the language here used lead our thoughts irresistibly to the Redeemer's pre-existing state of glory? From that source is derived the greatness of His condescension and humiliation unto death. Take away this thought, and the spirit of the passage evaporates; the apostle's complacency and triumph appear trifling; and may I not add, what he says on another occasion, "our preaching is vain, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins?" But, thanks be to God, ye have not so learned Christ. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, [*παράδοσιν ἀνθρώπων*, what men deliver, or teach, as opposed to the oracles of God,] after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ: for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, [*σωματικῶς, while possessing a bodily form:*]" so that, as Dr Doddridge expresses it, "His human nature is the temple of the Deity." §

affect the present argument. Those, however, who reject the common version would do well to consider the force of Bishop Burnet's remark, "that the Socinian interpretation is extremely cold and insipid; as if it were a mighty argument of humility, that though Christ wrought miracles, (which they strangely think signified by the phrase of being 'in the form of God,') yet He did not set up for Supreme Deity."—*On the Art.*, p. 46. To which may be added, that the apostle's design here is to engage the Philippians, after the example of Christ, to give up their own right for the advantage of others. *Vide* Dodd. in loc.

* "Κενόω, 'evacuo, exinanio,' proprie notatat *evacuere*, e. g., *vas*. Metaphorice innuit, *cessationem usus et operationis*. Ita adhibetur ad designandum statum profundissimæ exinanitionis Christi, quando se secundum humanam naturam evacuavit majestate et gloria, ipsi in unione personali communicata, quoad plenarium usum et exercitium, Phil. ii. 7. Proinde ipsa divina majestas et gloria humanæ Christi naturæ communicata mansit—sed evacuavit et abdicavit se plenario communicatæ majestatis usu et exercitio."—*Stockii Lexic.*

† "Ταπεινόω, 'humilio,' 'humilem reddo,' &c., proprie notat *depressionem et dejectionem* ratione *situs localis*; metaphorice designat. *depressionem atque dejectionem status ac conditionis*. Ita tribuitur Christo, qui etsi 'in forma Dei' esset, verus, Patrique et Spiritui Sancto coessentialis et coequalis Deus, benedictus in secula, tamen secundum humanam naturam seipsum humiliavit. formaque servi assumpta, Deo et hominibus inservivit in summa objectione," &c.—*Ibid.* ‡ Phil. ii. 5-8.

§ In a note upon the place he adds:—"I cannot think that these wonderful

Further to elucidate what has been now advanced, and to prevent an injudicious application of the truth I mean to inculcate, it should be observed, that the humiliation of the Son of God by no means implies a real change in His true dignity or absolute worthiness. I fear this matter has not been so much attended to as the importance of it requires. When it is said, for instance, that the "Word was made flesh,"—that the Redeemer, who was "in the form of God, made Himself of no reputation," we should by no means conclude that He became thereby less worthy or morally excellent than He was before. If an earthly monarch condescend to assume the garb, or to visit the humble habitation of a peasant, to answer some important moral purpose, he does not thereby lose any part of his moral excellence, however his political dignity may be eclipsed for that time. In fact, to say that any being whatever becomes possessed of less greatness and worth, dignity and glory, in a moral sense, than he did before, is to say that he is become a criminal. Far be it from us to suppose, as some have done, that the pre-existent nature of the Messiah was (if I may so express the crude opinion) *compressed* into a smaller degree of true dignity. The idea is equally destitute of philosophical accuracy and theological truth.

We remark, in the second place, that the apostle, while "glorying in the cross of Christ," must have considered Him as making *atonement* for human guilt. How else can we account for the language he employs? The inspired writer says not, "save in Jesus Christ, *although* crucified," which might have led us into a suspicion (were this passage alone debated) that he ascribed no efficacy to His sufferings, but had such a value for Him on other accounts, that he was resolved the ignominy of the cross should not deter him from his adherence to his exalted Lord. But his language is remarkably different—"save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ;" which necessarily implies, not that the crucifixion was an evil to be overlooked on account of some excellencies in the Sufferer, but that the *suffering itself* was the subject of his

words are intended merely to signify that God hath lodged in the hands of Christ a fulness of gifts to be conferred on men; while Socinus sinks it yet lower, as if it only referred to His complete knowledge of the Divine will. I assuredly believe that, as it contains an evident allusion to the Shechinah in which God dwelt, so it ultimately refers to the adorable mystery of the union of the Divine and human natures, in the person of the glorious Emmanuel."

glorying. But what rational ground of boasting could he have in that suffering if not vicarious? If St Paul gloried in his infirmities, it was that the "power of Christ" might rest upon him; and every instance of the kind, duly considered, instead of weakening, corroborates the above argument.

It is very remarkable, in what variety of methods the apostle expresses himself in reference to this subject:—"If righteousness come by the law, then is Christ dead in vain."* "We are justified freely by his grace, through the *redemption* that is in Christ Jesus."† "Christ our passover was *sacrificed* for us."‡ "Was Paul *crucified* for you?"§ The very question implies that the idea is absurd, when applied to any other than Christ. "But we see Jesus, who was made a little [*βραχύ τι*, for a short season] lower than the angels *for the suffering of death*,‖ crowned with glory and honour; that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man."¶ "Through death, he destroyed" the devil, delivered the slaves of "bondage," and made "reconciliation for the sins of the people."** "For such an high priest became us, ... who needeth not *daily*, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice; . . . . for this he did *once*, when he offered up himself,"†† "It is of necessity that this man [*τοῦτον*, this person] have somewhat also to offer."‡‡ "Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, ... by his own blood, entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us . . . . How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God?"§§ "Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Christ was "once offered to bear the sins of many."‖‖ "But this man, [*αὐτὸς δὲ*, but this person, or High Priest,] after he had offered *one* sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down at the right hand of God; . . . . for by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. . . . . Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, ... let us draw

* Gal. ii. 21. † Rom. iii. 24. ‡ 1 Cor. v. 7. § 1 Cor. i. 13.

‖ The words *διὰ τὸ πάθημα τοῦ θανάτου*, "for the suffering of death," intend the final cause of the humiliation of Christ: He was made low that He might suffer death. See Dr Owen's Exposition on the place.

¶ Heb. ii. 9. ** Heb. ii. 14, 15, 17. †† Heb. vii. 26, 27.

‡‡ Heb. viii. 3. §§ Heb. ix. 11–14. ‖‖ Heb. ix. 26, 28.

near with a true heart in full assurance of faith."* "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate."† "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died;" which clearly implies that the death of Christ delivereth from condemnation. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."‡

It is expressly asserted, that God "made him, who knew no sin, to be sin [*ἁμαρτίαν, a sin-offering*] for us."§ "God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."‖ "Ye who were sometimes far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both [Jews and Gentiles] one, ... that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross."¶ "God hath set him forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins, ... that he might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus."** "He who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for [*ὑπὲρ*, in the room of] us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"†† "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."‡‡ "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, [*περὶ ἁμαρτίαν*, by a sacrifice for sin, or a sin-offering,] condemned sin in the flesh."§§ "If one died for [*ὑπὲρ*, in the room of] all, then were all dead."‖‖ "Without shedding of blood is no remission."¶¶ "Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."* Not to multiply instances of this kind, which are very numerous in Paul's epistles; what is further observable, he insists that Christ "dying for our sins" was not *his* doctrine exclusively, but was maintained by him "according to *the Scriptures*."†

* Heb. x. 12, 14, 19, 22.
‡ Gal. iii. 13.
¶ Eph. ii. 13, 14, 16.
‡‡ Gal. iv. 4, 5.
¶¶ Heb. ix. 22.
§ 2 Cor. v. 21.
** Rom. iii. 25, 26.
§§ Rom. viii. 3.
* Acts xx. 28.
† Heb. xiii. 12.
‖ Rom. v. 8–11.
†† Rom. viii. 32.
‖‖ 2 Cor. v. 14.
† 1 Cor. xv. 3.

Accordingly we find the same ideas inculcated by the other inspired writers of the New Testament. Our Lord himself testifies that "He came . . . . to give His life a ransom for many." * And again :—"I am the door : by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved. . . . . I am the good shepherd : the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. . . . . As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father : and I lay down my life for the sheep. . . . . Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." † St Peter asserts that "Christ his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, ... by whose stripes we are healed." ‡ "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." § "Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold ; . . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot : who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world." ‖ "Neither is there salvation in any other : for there is none other name [or, worthiness] under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." ¶ St John says that Christ is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." ** "And he is the propitiation for our sins : and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." ††

While we appeal to such passages, we insist, not only that they represent to us the orthodox doctrine of a proper atonement, but that no other plausible, or even tolerable, interpretation can be given of them. To this we might add what the prophets, particularly Isaiah, have said of the Messiah suffering for sin :—"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. . . . . He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities : the chastisement of our peace was upon him ; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray ; we have turned every one to his own way ; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. . . . . For the transgression of my people was he stricken. . . . . It pleased the Lord to bruise him ; he hath put him to grief : when thou shalt make his soul an offer-

* Matt. xx. 28. † John x. 9, 11, 15, 17, 18.
‡ 1 Pet. ii. 24. § 1 Pet. iii. 18. ‖ 1 Pet. i. 18–20.
¶ Acts iv. 12. ** John i. 29. †† 1 John ii. 2.

ing for sin, he shall see his seed. . . . . He shall see of the travail of his soul; . . . . . he shall bear their iniquities. . . . . He was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." *

I am not intending in this discourse to produce a complete enumeration of Scripture passages, but to shew that the apostle, while glorying in the cross, intended to assert the atonement; which he inculcates in different forms of speech, and in which he is confirmed by other inspired writers of the New Testament and the Old. If the death of the Christ includes no more than the triumph of virtue, or a testimony for truth, we might well ask, What did He by His death more than others? and why is the apostle so inviolably and triumphantly attached to His cross? Let us now proceed to inquire—

II. What motives he had for this attachment. The orthodox Christians are often charged with undervaluing reason. Perhaps the charge may be retorted upon their opponents, with greater propriety, for undervaluing the Sacred Scriptures. But we entreat that we may not be condemned unheard; for, on the present subject, we have not only Scripture to allege, but reasons to offer. We "glory in the cross of Christ," or in Him as "crucified," because we have no evidence whatever that God is propitious to guilty men in any other way; through no other medium have we a consistent view of the Divine dispensations with respect to mankind; on this foundation alone can be erected the scriptural representations of Christ's mediatorial offices; without this medium the Church, in every age, would be destitute of those renovating influences which are equally as necessary as the remission of sin; and, finally, we appeal to the moral tendency and genuine effect of this doctrine.

We assert, in the first place, that we have no evidence whatever from whence we may conclude that God is propitious to guilty men in any other way. Heaven and earth proclaim that all the children of men are guilty. God assures us of the alarming fact, both in His word and by His witness in every conscience. Nor are we convicted barely by our own consciences, enlightened by the Holy Scriptures; for cool reason and unbribed equity lead to the same conclusion. The smallest degree of guilt, when rightly

* Isaiah liii. passim.

understood, is a very serious evil; and the danger to which it exposes the subject of it is tremendous. To assist your meditations on this interesting point, you would do well to consider, with profoundest reverence, your absolute dependence upon God, and the true character of His moral law. Those who are strangers to this employment, so highly proper for man, are but ill qualified to form a proper estimate of the nature and degrees of human guilt.

But how is this guilt, so dangerous and alarming, to be removed? What way is left for the guilty to be acquitted, and for conscience to be reasonably and effectually pacified? To avoid reflection affords but momentary relief; and the relief obtained by such a method is a cup mixed with many a bitter ingredient. Perhaps it will be said that repentance will suffice. Repentance, it is granted, is the offender's duty; and it is further granted that the repentance which God enjoins is always attended with the removal of guilt. But the inference we should draw from hence is not, as some have superficially imagined, that this duty itself is alone sufficient to recommend us to the Deity. That the performance of a certain duty should, in the Divine economy, be attended with forgiving mercy is one thing; but that the duty so performed is the true and sole reason of forgiveness is another. Nothing can be plainer from the sacred oracles than that pardon is exhibited to guilty men, and is actually conferred on the penitent; but who can infer from thence, without irreverent boldness, that God has therein no respect to a mediatory propitiation?

Besides, we may well ask, What kind and what degree of repentance will suffice? No doubt, sincerity and consequent reformation will be urged as the grand requisites. But sincerity and reformation are very equivocal expressions, in this connexion. Each must be either perfect or imperfect. Perfection of performance, be the duty what it may, falls not to the lot of any in the present state, as might be easily shewn, were this a proper place; but if pardon be administered for the sake of repentance, although imperfect, the reins of government are relaxed, and the standard of right and wrong, virtue and vice, made to vanish from God's dominion. The fact is, that not only pardon, but even repentance itself, is the effect of atonement. That a creature once guilty should return to God by repentance, without a Divine supernatural influence, is demonstrably impossible; and we further insist, that to impart such influence to the guilty without a vicarious oblation, has never

been, and, I venture to add, never can be, shewn to be worthy of the Great Supreme.

God has formed an indissoluble connexion between moral and natural evil. There is no sinning without suffering. To deny this is to deny that man is accountable for what he does. But if there is a connexion between sin and suffering, as founded in the very essence of a moral system, what becomes of the latter when the sinner returns to his duty, as penitent and reformed? From the very moment he begins to repent and reform, he is under obligation to do so; and it is therefore impossible, in the nature of the thing, that what he does this moment should have a meritorious influence on what he did the last.

To prevent, then, the connexion between crime and continued suffering, a miracle must be interposed by a sovereign act, in which it may appear that God has established a connexion between vice and misery, though the offender is pardoned, and that He does not treat in a manner perfectly alike beings who have never sinned, and beings who have: a miracle in which it may appear that a moral system is not to be violated with impunity, though the violators do not fall the perpetual victims of the Judge's displeasure; a miracle in which it is demonstrated that the moral law is holy, just, and good, though the transgressors of it do not continue under its condemnation. Such a miracle, my brethren, we behold in Christ crucified! If it be said that no other than the sinner himself can equitably suffer, the objector would do well to attend to the consequences—viz., that if he is a sinner, he must be a sufferer for ever; or, that it is not in the power of Omnipotence to save him, and at the same time shew everlasting displeasure at his sin. Which of these consequences will the objector adopt? *Both* he cannot avoid. *To be* averse to sin is essential to the holiness of Jehovah; and to *shew* that aversion is equally essential to His all-wise government. But, on the ungrateful hypothesis I am now opposing, which discards a piacular victim, how can that aversion be shewn to sin, while the sinner is pardoned?

Will it be said that a personal temporary suffering is a sufficient manifestation of the Divine displeasure at the sin of the pardoned criminal? If by "sufficient" be meant equitable, it is by no means true; for on what conceivable principle can we suppose mere equity will suspend the established connexion between moral

and natural evil? But if by "sufficient suffering" be intended a sufficiency to answer the ends of Divine government, we might still ask, on what principle can we imagine that less than what is equitable is adequate to that end? If it be said that mercy may be expected to interpose to break the established connexion between sin and pain, we again urge that this does not afford the least degree of certainty that God will be propitious to the guilty; the utmost that can be inferred from this idea is, that possibly God may, by a sovereign act, put an end to the sinner's woe, in some distant period. And even this faint ray of hope would be greatly clouded with embarrassing difficulties; for the sufferer must reflect, "What I endure is not the effect of cruelty,* but equity. On what ground can I expect exemption from what is my due? If it is possible I may, in some future point of my existence, be set at liberty from my prison of 'outer darkness,' and 'the worm that never dieth,' it is equally possible, because nothing but what is right, that I may 'never come out thence, until I have paid the uttermost farthing' of what I owe to my awful creditor. And if there be no piacular victim, in which may be displayed the rights of rectitude and justice, the faint ray of hope I had must instantly disappear."

To recur to the plea of infinite benevolence, in order to evade the doctrine of atonement, can afford no relief to a guilty conscience. Infinite benevolence is either consistent with punitive justice or it is not; if not, why should the impenitent be threatened

* "Unjustly are the believers of an atonement reproached for representing the Supreme Being as passionate, revengeful, irreconcilable, cruel, and delighting in blood. To suppose justice in God without goodness we allow absurd; but it is no less absurd to suppose goodness in God without justice. The union and harmony of the Divine perfections is as essential to God as the perfections themselves. If one perfection must give place to another, one must be greater than another. But all the perfections of God are infinite. His goodness is not greater than his justice. His aversion to moral evil is as infinite as His delight in the prosperity of His creatures. The last cannot oppose the first; for then the harmony of the Divine perfections would cease. All the Divine perfections are so connected that no one can be so displayed as to darken another. The effects of God's love to a depraved creature can never be inconsistent with the exercise of His aversion to moral evil; and in the views in which the depraved are objects of His displeasure, they cannot be at the same time objects of His love."—*Mr A. Van Alphen's Defence of some Doctrines of the Protestant Religion, in answer to Eberhard's Reasonings against the Atonement of Christ*: in Dr Erskine's "Sketches and Hints of Church History and Theological Controversy," — a work replete with curious information.

with being "punished with everlasting destruction?" If it be consistent, how can the guilty mind receive comfort from it? The thought will always return, "Perhaps God will never cease to punish me, though He is infinitely benevolent." But to discover the weakness and vanity of such an evasion, we need only attend to the nature of Divine benevolence; which implies good-will, not only to man, but to the universality of being. Every sin, in every degree, stands in direct opposition to this. Let any man but acknowledge that he is a sinner, and he can no longer derive comfort from the consideration of mere benevolence. If he enjoy consolation, it cannot proceed from a just view of that sublime perfection of Deity. He must form a false representation of it. He must consider it as partial,—as not comprehending for its object all systems, all worlds, all beings, Jehovah himself, His laws and righteous government, but regarding himself only; which partial and selfish view can no more administer solid relief to a guilty mind, than the consideration of wholesome laws can afford hope of pardon to a criminal.

Ye sons of perplexity, who disquiet yourselves in vain, turn here! The Saviour of the world compassionately calls you:—"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that shall be incensed against him shall be ashamed. In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." *

Hear the same encouraging truth in the language of the New Testament:—"What things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace (διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρώσεως)

* Isa. xlv. 22–25.

through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be (ἱλαστήριον) *a propitiation* through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus." * In other words:—"When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to *redeem* them that were under the law, that we might obtain the adoption of sons." †

Infinite benevolence, inasmuch as it includes a steady regard to infinite rectitude, and the inviolable honours of the moral government of the universe, requires that human perfection and meritorious worthiness be somewhere found, on account of which any part of the human system may be preserved from the perpetual sufferings which guilt unremoved incurs. In the sacred person and mysterious sufferings of the Son of God we find that human perfection and meritorious worthiness. His being "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," and originally superior to all human obligation, because the "Word was God," lays a rational ground for merit. Sovereign mercy caused to meet upon Him our iniquities, and in Him they were punished by impartial justice. On the cross "mercy and truth met together, righteousness and peace embraced each other." Here the conscience, awakened to just feelings, is pacified, because here Divine justice rests with perpetual complacency. "God forbid," therefore, "that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

A second reason for glorying in the cross is, because through no other medium have we a consistent view of the Divine dispensations with respect to mankind. Without this, the forbearance of God to guilty men in every age is inexplicable. On what principle, but that of the atonement, can we account, with any degree of rational satisfaction, for the immediate punishment of angels, while towards mankind so much lenity is shewn? Nowhere are we given to understand that fallen angels are in a state of probation; and were there no atoning Interposer, a state of trial could not belong to men.

Perhaps it will be said, that the Divine forbearance is only a branch of that benevolence which waits patiently for men to conform themselves to its design of making them happy. To this we

* Rom. iii. 19–26. † Gal. iv. 4, 5.

reply, that mere benevolence manifested to a sinner should ever remove guilt is utterly inconceivable; for benevolence to governing rectitude presents an insurmountable obstacle. Nor is it more intelligible, that guilty man, because a free agent, may happen to conform himself to the will of God, who, being supremely good, is always ready to receive him. As soon may a man annihilate himself, or create a world, as a sinner emerge from guilt to innocence, or from pollution to purity, in virtue of his own freedom. But consider the Divine forbearance, in connexion with the doctrine for which I plead, with consequent gracious influences, and the whole difficulty is removed. In the cross alone can we behold a rational basis for the long-suffering of God to a race of beings deserving instantly to fall from probation to punishment.

It is on the same principle that we have any consistent ideas of the proclamation of mercy to mankind in every age of the world. To call this a proclamation of mere benevolence, is not only to confound language, but to ascribe to God a conduct utterly unworthy of Him. Far, far different is the import of the angelic anthem: "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will towards men." Admit that mercy includes atonement made for sin according to the requisitions of infinite rectitude, whereby gifts are procured for guilty men, that the Lord God might dwell among them, and it acquires a sense unutterably important. The cloud of obscurity is dispersed; and the firmament of the Divine dispensations appears clear and serene. As ever, then, I would understand the import and method of revealed mercy, and feel the heaven which it confers, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross."

Among the parts of the Divine dispensations towards men, we find the institution of sacrifices, with express reference to human guilt.* If they were not appointed types of a more perfect sacrifice, on what principle can we account for their institution? Does God delight in slaughter for its own sake? Would He command thousands of animals to be sacrificed by an order of men appointed for that purpose, without any moral end or important instruction intended by the service? I do not speak of the practice as having obtained among all nations, both the rude and the civilised. Nor do I inquire, in this place, how such a practice came to be so universally adopted. But what I wish to know is, why were sacrifices

* Lev. xvi. 21, 22.

divinely appointed for the avowed purpose of making atonement, if no atonement by sacrifice was necessary? If these were not "shadows of better things to come," what were they? It is true they could not purify the conscience, being defective in their very nature for that purpose; but did they not represent that one offering which perfects for ever them that are sanctified? "For if the blood of bulls and of goats . . . . sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"* Admit the apostolic solution, and all the difficulty ceases; adopt the Socinian hypothesis, and the institution of sacrifices is involved in inexplicable mystery.

It has often been urged, but never satisfactorily answered by those who are concerned to do it: If the death of Christ was not of a vicarious nature, we are unable to account for the Divine conduct towards Him in His extraordinary sufferings? If He "suffered, the just for the unjust, to bring us unto God," the question is fairly solved; if not, on what principle, we would fain know, can we discover any wisdom or equity, much less goodness and mercy, in that branch of the dispensations of Heaven? That He suffered justly for personal sin, cannot be advanced by a Christian, without renouncing his religion at once; nor can it be proved by its professed adversaries. I do not insist, in the present argument, on the corporeal sufferings He endured from men, which would have required a miracle to prevent them; and yet such an unparalleled instance of universal innocence and purity seemed, if His death was not necessary, to claim a miraculous protection. "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?"† I rest my argument now on what He endured in His mind at the hand of God.

On what hypothesis but that for which we contend, can we account for the agony of Jesus in the garden? "And he was withdrawn from his disciples about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening

* Heb. ix. 13, 14. † Matt. xxvi. 53, 54.

him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."* "And he began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; and saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death."† "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."‡

If in Christ crucified we do not behold One who is perfect humanity personally united to Deity, "offering Himself without spot to God," through the Eternal Spirit, "for the redemption of transgressors," whereby He was destined to endure what His innocent soul would otherwise have never felt, why should He exclaim, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Why should He offer "prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears," unto Him who was able to save Him from death? And especially, we may add, with what propriety could it be said that He was "heard" therein?§ But if unbounded wisdom saw that equity and mercy could by no other way be so effectually displayed in the removal of guilt, and the complete restoration of rebellious men,—the chief of sinners not excluded,—has not the Christian believer sufficient cause for resolving not to glory, "save in the cross of Christ?"

"Yes," may he say, "He bore my sins, and was wounded for my transgressions; by His stripes I am healed. Here is the love of God to sinners commended in a manner, and to a degree, unutterable. The reality and intenseness of His mental sufferings do not stagger my faith, but rather establish it: for the reality of His pains and anguish proves that He was really possessed of my nature, a true body and a reasonable soul; and their intenseness, that He endured at the hand of punitive justice. But as He had no sins of His own to be punished for, I am encouraged to view Him as my substitute. By His death I live. In a short time, at most, I die; nevertheless I live, and shall live for ever! On the wonders of the cross, all enlightened intelligences in heaven and on earth fix their eyes. Into the transactions of the cross, the

* Luke xxii. 41–44. † Mark xiv. 33, 34. ‡ John xii. 27, 28.
§ Heb. v. 7. See Dr Owen's Exposition on the place.

angels of every rank desire to look, to contemplate truths more interesting to the moral system than any which the dispensations of heaven had ever presented to them. By the medium of the cross, I also have access to the joy of angels; nay more, to the safety of a pardoned sinner, to the honours of justifying grace, to the privileges of an heir of glory. No, ye myriads of happy beings who surround the throne, there is not one of you all whose condition I envy. I also am come to Mount Zion, to make one of the common family. I also am a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem ever since I came to the blood of sprinkling. Wherever I am found, whether in the body or out of the body, in the lower or the upper apartment of my heavenly Father's house, if I am but favoured with a steady view of your God and my God, through the medium of the cross, it is enough. In Christ, and Him crucified, I have all I want, in time and to eternity."

In the third place, we insist that on this foundation alone can be erected the scriptural representations of Christ's mediatorial offices. If Jesus had not made atonement by the blood of His cross, the pen of inspiration would never have been employed in writing the following passages:—"For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burnt without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate."* "Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle [His body;] . . . . neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. . . . . Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, to appear in the presence of God [ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν] *for us.* Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entered into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."† The distinguishing office of a priest is to deal with God on behalf of men. Take away this discriminating character, and it will be utterly unaccountable how such an order as that of the priesthood should ever

* Heb. xiii. 11, 12. † Heb. ix. 11, 12, 24–26.

have existence. If, therefore, a real priest is one who is personally qualified to act for the guilty in things pertaining to God, and seeing no guilty person can sustain this office except in a shadowy representation, it follows that Christ alone is the only true priest, either in heaven or earth.

To the same origin must be traced the Messiah's prophetical and regal character. Of little use would it have been to our world to receive instruction from a prophet, if there be no priest and sacrifice to remove our guilt. Increasing knowledge would only have rendered our case the more deplorable. To know our transgressions more accurately, without discerning a consistent way of relief, would augment a sinner's anguish, and tend to despair; yet a consistent and honourable way to comfort, without the atonement of the cross, we have none, as before shewn. The prophetic office, therefore, necessarily implies the sacerdotal. Had not our world been favoured with a priest, it never would have seen a prophet.

The Messiah was destined to be the King of saints. Thus Daniel describes His glorious and immortal reign:—"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. . . . . And the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom."* Christ's proper work as a king is to bring His people, by authoritative exertion, from a state of spiritual slavery to that of consummate liberty and bliss. He conquers the rebellious, protects the weak, and rewards the faithful. But it is manifest that these objects could not be effected, if there were no atonement made for their sins. On that supposition, His first work must have been to counteract the claims of justice by force not by sacrifice. He must have proceeded to overturn that capital maxim in the government of God, "Without shedding of blood is no remission." If conquering by force were sufficient, what need of a kingly Messiah? Might not the arm of Omnipotence have performed it, without the intervention of the human nature? The truth is, the Son of God purchased the Church with His own blood; and "by the blood of

* Dan. vii. 13, 14, 22.

His covenant sends forth His prisoners out of the pit"* into which they had fallen, and subdues their rebellious spirits by His gracious influence.

The King of saints, moreover, engages to protect the weak, and reward the worthy. He protects the weak; but what claim have these to His protection, if not honourably introduced into His kingdom by having their crimes pardoned? Of little avail, in the present case, would be the plea of weakness without innocence, or the pretence of innocence without the removal of guilt, or remission without sacrifice. He rewards the worthy; but where shall we find among men that worthiness which is rewardable, if we discard the merits of a substitute? The best of men must own, after their greatest exertions of duty, that they are unprofitable servants, and unworthy of the least of God's mercies. Do any disdain to be beholden to the cross, as the foundation of promised bliss? Let them seriously reflect wherein they differ from the scribes and Pharisees, "who shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

A fourth reason for glorying in the cross is, that without this medium, the Church, in every age, would be destitute of that renovation and virtuous purity "without which no one shall see the Lord."† The doctrine of Divine influence on the mind, whereby it is enabled to improve appointed means, and is finally restored to purity and happiness, is so frequently, so variously, and so clearly taught in the Holy Scriptures, that for any person to deny it, with the Bible in his hands, is to me one of the greatest proofs of human depravity. That a Deist should reject the doctrine is very accountable; but for a professed Christian to do so is perfectly astonishing. The very existence of revelation supposes it. It is expressly taught in the Old and New Testament. And if ever such a creature as man now is, accountable yet imperfect, be restored to happiness, even the principles of reason demonstrate its necessity. No heresy more dreadful, nor more pernicious in its effects, than what I now refer to, has ever infested the Church of God. To renounce the agency of the Spirit of God, is to open a flood-gate for a torrent of dangerous errors in principle and practice. The suspension of that agency, occasioned by the self-sufficiency, ingratitude, and manifold provocations of men,

* Zech. ix. 11. † Heb. xii. 14.

is the cause; other calamities in the Church are but the effects.* But necessary as this influence is to the Church, and however important its effects are, it may be demonstrated, were this a proper place for it, that it flows to us only through the medium of atonement. Yes, it is in virtue of Christ's meritorious sufferings, when He led captivity captive, triumphing over all obstacles by His cross, and ascended up on high to make intercession, "that the Lord God dwells among men."†

Some there are who admit the doctrine of atonement, but reject that of supernatural influence; others admit the latter, but reject the former. These are extremes as erroneous as they are opposite; unfounded in Scripture, and of dangerous tendency. The one allows a sinner pardon, but no purity of heart; without which, however, "he cannot see God:" the other allows purity without pardon, admittance to heaven while a sentence of condemnation lies against him; for without shedding of atoning blood is no remission. "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

Might we not appeal, in the last place, as another reason for glorying in the cross, to the moral tendency and genuine effects of this doctrine? To discuss the question, who are the most practical Christians,—those who maintain the sentiments I have been defending, or those who reject them,—might appear no less impertinent than invidious. Let us therefore adopt another method. Let us attend to what St Paul relates of his own experience on this head. In his mind, the world, the great idol of the many, and the rival of its Maker, compared with Christ, and redemption through Him crucified, had neither beauties nor charms.

In virtue of this doctrine (δι' οὗ, *whereby, by whom;* the cross,

* "We are much more apt to be sensible of the effect than of the cause; whether we hear of such effects abroad, or whether we feel or fear them at home. If we hear of great devastations of countries, towns sacked, battles fought, blood spilt, barbarous usages, and acts of violence done, we are struck with a smarter and quicker sense upon the report of these things than if we be made to understand how the religion of Christians doth languish everywhere; or when we hear of the prevailing pride, and anger, and malice, and contention; or of formality, deadness, indifferency, lukewarmness in the things of God. That is, the evils that are caused affect us a great deal more than those that we are to reflect upon as the cause, and which are all comprehended in that one cause, the retraction of the Spirit."—*Howe's Sermons on the Prosperous State of the Christian Interest before the End of Time by a Plentiful Effusion of the Holy Spirit*, from Ezek. xxxix. 29.

† Psalm lxviii. 18.

or Christ crucified) "the world is crucified unto me." It is one sad effect and indisputable evidence of our deplorable apostasy, that men are so universally prone to put a disproportionate value on the world. But when grace opens the eyes, and rectifies the mental taste, the world does not appear as a living body, with all its beauties, graces, and captivating qualities; but as a lifeless, disfigured corpse. Beauties, indeed, there are in the works of Jehovah. We behold traces of almighty power, boundless wisdom, and profuse goodness; but these beauties are at best fading in their nature, the possession of them is transient, and they even perish in the using. Whereas, the glories of redemption issuing from the cross are unchangeable, and their effects immortal.

In the same light St Paul regarded the profits of the world compared with those of the cross. "The world is crucified unto me." As a mangled corpse is unprofitable or pernicious to the living; in like manner, the whole system of created things, in their present state of subjection to vanity, appears to a soul spiritually alive to God, viewing all through the medium of redemption, equally destitute of vital beauties and permanent utility. To insult the dead is indecent; and is it not the united dictate of decency, of piety, and of reason, when the functions of life are at a stand, and the symptoms of putrefaction appear, "Bury my dead out of my sight"—henceforth let my chief converse be with the living?

Let us call in the assistance of faith, my brethren, to contemplate this subject. Be not satisfied with a bare speculation of it; but devoutly inquire into the design of Heaven in the wonderful dispensation of the Redeemer's cross. View and feel what pure love, what spotless holiness, what awful justice meet here. This transaction, you know, did not take place by the interposition of the Son against the will of the Father; nor by the will of the Father against that of the Son. No; it was the voice of justice, rectoral and punitive justice, that loudly demanded the execution of law, while the united love of the Father and the Son furnished the sacrifice. "As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."* What wonderful harmony of love is

* John x. 15, 18.

this! Here we discern, besides the reciprocal love of Father and Son, the love of eternal order, the love of holiness, law, and justice, the love of human happiness! And shall so much love, mingled with so much sorrow, and both replete with eternal blessings, produce no emotion of love, no sentiments of gratitude, no spiritual fortitude, no cheerful obedience? Yes; "the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, [*ὑπὲρ πάντων*, in the stead of all,] then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again." * Privileged and actuated in this manner, every well-informed Christian, with St Paul, little regards what a scoffing world thinks or says of him: nay, he cheerfully acquiesces in his lot. "I am crucified unto the world." How insignificant, then, the frowns and smiles of mortals! "It is a small thing with me to be judged of you, or of man's judgment; he who judgeth me is the Lord." With me, *Christ is all and in all.*

Thus I have endeavoured to shew what it is to glory in the cross of Christ, and with what reason Christians, who follow St Paul's example, do so glory. Here alone do we find the Deity propitious; this is the true key to the wisdom and glories of the Divine dispensations towards mankind; on this are founded the Messiah's mediatory offices; through this medium proceed renovating influences to the Church; and here we most effectually learn to die unto the world, and live to God,—that is, to answer the great end of our existence.

If this doctrine, my friends, be so important in itself, and so interesting to sinful men, what effect has it produced in us who profess to believe it? The excellency of Divine truths arises chiefly from their excellent tendency. When Christ and the world, its riches and honours, its beauties and charms, are proposed to us, where lies our habitual preference? Do we frequently, contemplating them through the medium of infallible inspiration, compare the delusive prospects of the world with the substantial realities of redemption? What are the vanities of time to the glories of eternity? What are the creatures, with whom we spend a few days, and those days full of trouble, compared with our Maker and Redeemer, with whom the faithful

* 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

are destined to live through eternal ages? Do we appropriate the exhibited blessing of atonement, for the important purposes of removing that fear which is the offspring of guilt unremoved; of awakening our penitential sorrow, and hatred of every sin; of stimulating our love to Him who first loved us, and who gave Himself as our ransom; of regulating our views, our passions, and our conduct, that we may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things?*

* "What object can heaven and earth exhibit, so worthy of the human heart, so capable of engaging its warmest and most pre-eminent affection, as Jesus crucified? What He made, and died to purchase, He has a right to demand; and nothing but unbelief and ingratitude can dare to dispute His prerogative. Can love find an object so calculated to conciliate its regard, to satisfy its desires, to determine its attachment, and to return its affection with infinite complacency and delight, as the Son of God? If a sacrifice of what is most dear be the proof of pure and predominant affection, He exposed His person to indignity and scorn, and sacrificed His life. If mental excellence can claim the esteem, the richest endowments of wisdom and knowledge centre in Him. Who has the most indubitable claim to your affection, your homage, your esteem, your obedience? Who, but He who was pierced to death for your transgressions, and who suffered all the wants and miseries of humanity, that the most astonishing demonstration of His love might be given to a guilty world, and the richest blessings of eternity might flow through the blood of His cross to them that believe in Him? Whenever the world would bribe, look at the cross and despise its offers. When it would gain the ascendancy in your esteem, contemplate the price with which you have been purchased, and then say whether St Paul spoke the language of gratitude and wisdom or not, when he said, 'I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.'

"If a state of mind mortified to earthly vanities be the true criterion of love to Christ, how rarely does that mark appear as an attendant on religious profession! How few indulge that habitual poverty of spirit, which, while it is the best antidote against the follies and splendour of the world, is the best temper in which to survey, with holy awe, the wonders of the cross! How empty is the boast which some make of their dependence upon a crucified Saviour, while, every day they live, they are crucifying Him afresh by their pride and love of the world! If attachment to the cross be the best preservative against all the mean servilities of worldly conformity, and the only cure for that low solicitude which courts the honour that cometh from man, how miserable must be the delusion, and how aggravated the guilt of those whose life seems one perpetual but ineffectual struggle to reconcile together the love of God and the friendship of the world, the debasement of carnal compliances with the exalted freedom of the Christian character, and the society of the enemy of the cross with the communion of those who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity! These are opposites never to be reconciled, except in the ideal plans and imaginary hopes of those whose false theory disappoints them even in this life, and, while it leaves them continually tossed upon a sea of chagrin, and tumultuous agitation of mind, abandons them at last to the misery of those who go down to the grave with 'a lie in their right hand.'

"The sufferings of Christ are the best medium through which to view the

How mournful to reflect, that a doctrine so scriptural, so rational, so replete with consolation, and salutary in its tendency, should be discarded by any of the guilty race of Adam! St Paul, who was not deficient in reasoning powers, or acquired abilities, did not adopt the doctrine of the cross without suitable evidence. "We speak wisdom," says he, "among them that are perfect; yet not the wisdom of this world: . . . . we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world for our glory." * And the important inference he draws is this:—"Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God; for it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise that they are vain." †

We should not be surprised, my brethren, if men who claim a religious character, and men of reputed eminence in other respects, oppose this doctrine. ‡ Thus it was of old:—"We preach Christ

world in every form, and under all possible circumstances of vicissitude, of grandeur, of poverty, or of affliction. What are all its enjoyments, most splendid objects, and highest style of dignity, when brought to the cross? Beheld in that mirror, pleasure is divested of its charms, honour appears a transient bubble, and even crowns themselves lose their lustre. If anything can emphatically proclaim that 'all is vanity,' it is the *cross*. To pour infinite contempt on all sublunary greatness, He, 'whose is the earth and the fulness thereof,' took the form of a servant, chose a manger for His birthplace, and an accursed tree as His bed of honour. If anything can humble pride, and mortify the claims of aspiring grandeur, as well as raise the hope of oppressed virtue, it must be to view the Lord of universal nature voluntarily choosing that line of life which is most exposed to affliction, and those connexions which human wisdom and human greatness invariably despise. To suffer and die was the principal part of His plan, and the cross the favourite medium through which it was to be unfolded. Here, while the proud may see all the pomp of terrestrial glory stained, and the most captivating scenes of life passing away as a shadow, the poor find no cause to blush for their humble condition, or to be ashamed of that poverty which is the result of Divine appointment, not the effect of disgraceful indolence or vice. Out of every evil, infinite wisdom will educe good in perpetual progression; and under all the storms of adversity and temptation that disturb this vale of tears, the cross will ever prove to them a secure and glorious shelter."—*De Courcy's Christ Crucified the Distinguishing Topic of the Gospel*, vol. i., pp. 121–131.

* 1 Cor. ii. 6, 7. † 1 Cor. iii. 18–20.

‡ "Here lies the principal offence of the cross. It allows not the sinner himself to bring any, even the most costly sacrifice of his own, but provides the sacrifice for him. It destroys every idea of human merit in the great article of acceptance with God, casts down the whole world as guilty rebels at the feet of

crucified, to the Jews," who claim a religious character, "a stumblingblock, and to the Greeks," who boast of science and wisdom as if engrossed by themselves, "foolishness; but unto them who believe" that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, "both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."*

The death of Christ as a sacrifice, however undervalued by many on earth, is in heaven a matter of the greatest moment, and of the highest triumph. Hear the language of redeemed saints:— "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." Listen to the exclamations of angels:—"And I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying," as the deserved concurrence, and united language, of universal nature, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."†

sovereign mercy, dashes human pride to the ground, suffers no flesh to glory in the Divine presence, but speaks this language equally to the prince and the peasant, the philosopher and the fool, 'He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord.'"—*Dr Evans's Four Discourses on Christ Crucified*, p. 161.

* 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. † Rev. v. 9, 11–13.

SERMON III.

THE CERTAINTY OF THE RESURRECTION, ARGUED FROM THE NATURE OF CHRIST'S MEDIATORIAL KINGDOM.

1 Corinthians xv. 24–28.

"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

To every attentive reader of his Bible, these words, as to their full meaning, must appear involved in considerable obscurity, not so much from the mode of expression, as from the nature of the subject. Mere human penetration, independent of the analogy of faith and the Holy Spirit's teaching, will not succeed; let me therefore entreat you, my brethren, to lift up your hearts to God for His enlightening influence, that I may be enabled to speak, and you to hear, in a profitable manner.

The leading design of our text, and indeed of the whole chapter, is evidently to prove the *certainty of the resurrection;* a doctrine of Divine revelation fraught with the most animating encouragement; a doctrine much insisted upon by the apostles, in which themselves felt a peculiar interest, and which they found well adapted to inspire their converts with steadfastness and zeal, while exposed to so much danger from the hand of persecution. But though it was found peculiarly useful at a time when the saints were accounted as sheep for the slaughter, by reason of the oppressor's fury, yet to lose a steady view of it in seasons of prosperity must prove injurious; and a realising evidence of its just importance

will be useful to the Christian in every state of his mind or circumstance of his life.

In the preceding part of this chapter, the apostle shews the certainty of a general resurrection from that of Christ; for why should it be questioned that God will produce the future harvest, since He hath presented us with the first-fruits? And the same he argues from the contrast subsisting between Christ and the first Adam:—"For as in Adam all die, so in Christ," the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, "shall all," by resuscitation, "be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first-fruits, afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father." These words, and the following, to the end of our text, I do not consider as a digression from the subject in debate, but rather as a direct proof, from a new and sublime topic, founded on Scripture prophecy. "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."* The nature of Messiah's kingdom had been the well-known subject of ancient prediction, and of the apostle's ministry among the Corinthians; he, therefore, fixes on this topic in prosecution of his leading theme with peculiar emphasis.

The subject which I think is contained in the text, and to which your attention is now called, is the mediatorial kingdom of Jesus Christ, in its origin, operations, consummation, and consequences; a subject of the utmost importance, it must be acknowledged, considered in itself, while in the order of apostolic reasoning it exhibits a proof, amounting to the highest certainty, of a future general resurrection, particularly a resurrection of the saints to eternal glory. In attempting to trace the inspired thoughts of this apostle, who was so eminently favoured with a sublime and comprehensive prospect of the Divine plans and dispensation, I shall—

I. Offer some observations, which may have a tendency to *explain* this difficult passage.

1. The grand plan of God seems to comprehend three kingdoms or constitutions, each of distinct considerations, though not strictly independent of one another. The first of these is that of primitive perfection, which may be said to have existed from eternity, and continued after creation until the introduction of sin by the dis-

* Psalm cx. 1.

obedience of Adam. Here, economically, this primitive, absolute kingdom ends; and here, economically, the kingdom of mediation takes its rise.

We are to distinguish between the secret purpose, and the orderly manifestation of that purpose, relative to the same thing. Thus, in the former sense, the mediatorial kingdom of Christ began with His eternal engagements as a surety to His future Church, which He would redeem and save, notwithstanding foreseen defection and the greatest obstacles; but in the latter sense, its origin must be sought when a remedy became actually needful. It may be also useful to distinguish between the parts of the mediatorial kingdom, and in each the acts of its King. All worlds, visible and invisible, form so many parts of it, but differently interesting; whereas the Church is an object of pre-eminent peculiarity, a part to which all the others have an especial reference. Thus also the acts of Christ in this vast dominion are extremely diversified, but all are subservient to the Church, and some of them of so peculiar and discriminating a nature, and so wonderful in their effects, as to challenge eternal admiration. The continuance of this kingdom, economically considered, is from the first act of mediatory favour to fallen Adam to the immediate consequence of the resurrection, which is the final, decisive act of delivering up the kingdom to God.

Here, then, the mediatorial kingdom ends, and that of glory commences. Economical relations alter, and mediatorial acts will cease for ever. God will be "all in all." To illustrate these remarks by a familiar comparison, we may say, the kingdom of primitive perfection resembles an ocean of love and delight; that of mediation, a powerful spring, derived originally from the ocean, flowing, and increasing as it flows, into a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God; until, at last, it is swallowed up in the same ocean of love and delight, which is the state of glory.

2. As there are three kingdoms, so each of them has a King or Sovereign corresponding with its nature. Who is the King of the *first* of these kingdoms? Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, considered in His own essential nature, irrespective of redeeming grace and mercy. The *second* kingdom has Emmanuel, Jehovah the Son, considered in His capacity of Mediator, for its King. And it is observable that, in this economy, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, sent by Him, and promoting His designs until the con-

summation of all things, when cometh the end, and the kingdom is delivered up. The Sovereign of the *third* kingdom is God essentially considered, as prior to the kingdom of mediation; thus the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, shall be all in all. You perceive I do not represent the Divine Persons as a distinction in Deity founded in economical offices, but as essential to the Divine nature; a distinction which is not the result of the Divine will, (for that is the character of a created nature,) but arising necessarily from that life which is essential to a nature infinitely active.

Hence, as these three kingdoms are but three views or distinct considerations of one grand plan, so the corresponding Sovereigns, properly speaking, are not *three* Beings but *one*, presented under different considerations. And as one kingdom does not follow another to the utter exclusion of the preceding, so neither does one Sovereign exclude all influence of the others.

3. As the Mediator, God the Son, became a King by a solemn investiture, so He is to make an open and public resignation of His delegated authority and undertaking. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, . . . that God may be all in all." This investiture was the fruit of sovereign benevolence, directed by unerring wisdom, a well-adapted, complete remedy for all who should be interested in it. The evil being foreseen, the remedy was fore-appointed. Hereby He became a mediatorial Head, a Surety, a Priest of heavenly order, an infallible Prophet, and a King to reign in righteousness. But these offices, as they are subservient to the mediatorial kingdom, will have an end, economically considered; since the kingdom itself, immediately after the resurrection, and the final sentence, the concluding act of Messiah's reign, will be resigned to Jehovah, the Father of all. I say, the Father of *all;* for the term Father seems not to refer to a personal relation, but to the Divine nature itself; as in those words, "Our Father who art in heaven."

When this infinitely-interesting transaction takes place, a public resignation of the kingdom in the view of assembled worlds, all acts of mediation cease. Interceding for transgressors will be no more; no sacrifice for sin will be available; and the prophetic office has no longer any objects who need intermediate ways of instruction. Once more—

4. Such a solemn investiture, and public resignation, it is mani-

fest, must imply a business which the Mediator had to accomplish. The King of Zion, my brethren, is no unmeaning title. To be head over all things to the Church,—to redeem and save a people from among men,—to overcome His enemies and theirs,—and to present them before God a glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle, —to remove sin and misery to an infinite distance from them,— to fill them with happiness and invest them with glorious bodies ;— these things, and millions more of a subordinate nature, must require exertions and operations that claim our highest admiration. In the present state, it is but a small portion of these wonders we can comprehend. Yet we are indulged with a glimpse, enough to excite longing desires after more—after a building of God, "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." The theme is equally grand, interesting, and delightful : oh that I may be enabled to speak, though briefly, in a manner not altogether unworthy of it ! Let us proceed therefore—

II. To take a view of Christ's mediatorial kingdom, while recounting some of His undertakings and chief *operations* in its management. But let us keep in mind, my brethren, that we tread on holy ground ; that the subject is of a nature altogether above the reach of unassisted reason ; that at every step we need Divine revelation for our guide and rule. Here, then, we find, from the event, it was a part of His undertaking who should reign in Zion—

1. That all things were to be created by Him and for Him. This act indeed was of a preparatory nature, but a preparation equally august, necessary, and suitable. The fact itself is affirmed by an infallible writer :—"By him" who afterwards was made flesh "were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers : all things were created by him, and for him." * Another inspired witness is equally decisive :—"All things were made by him ; and without him was not anything made that was made." † Such words require neither criticism nor comment.

The vast universe is but one mansion, with various apartments ; and to build it was the first preparatory step for executing the work of mediation. If God must have a family to serve Him, a

* Col. i. 16. † John i. 3.

people formed for Himself to shew forth His praise, to love Him as their Father, and enjoy Him as their portion, there must be a residence prepared to receive and nurture them. But what is this mansion? View it in thought as to its dimensions, foundation, and furniture; contemplate its parts, decorations, and inhabitants; then with adoration acknowledge, that He who built all these things is no other than "God over all blessed for ever." Again—

2. He was to "uphold" all created things by His power; yet in awful equity and high sovereignty. As to His influence in sustaining all things, it is plainly asserted that "by Him all things consist," or have their continued subsistence both individually and collectively.* It is also further expressly declared that "He upholdeth all things by the word of His power." † To *uphold* requires the same power as to *create;* for to preserve or sustain the things first produced is but an uninterrupted continuance of the first creating energy. Were this but suspended, all created existence would cease to be.

But though He bears up all things thus in existence, yet intelligent creatures were upheld in a poise truly awful. The hand of equity held the balance even; and, first of all, angelic beings were tried. By sovereign favour some of these kept their first estate, but by the decision of impartial equity others were found wanting. Behold, then, the goodness and severity of God, towards this part of creation! And in a similar way were the progenitors of the human race upheld. Contemplate the interesting scene in paradise. The equitable trial was made; the fatal consequences pervaded every individual of their posterity. With sin came death, that is, the loss of promised life. Exemption from death was federally connected with sinless obedience, but by transgression a forfeiture was made of that high privilege. Obnoxiousness to punishment, which we call guilt, followed sin. The moral powers of the mind and all the affections were thrown into disorder. Our Divine Lord foresaw that by all men bad habits would be formed, and, by many, vile deeds perpetrated; that sin would abound, "all flesh corrupt his way upon the earth," and iniquity, as a fountain, pour its noxious, deadly streams in all directions. And as every child of man has thus lost the life of God, so by death our bodies are kept in the most degrading prison, and as it were insulted. But

* Col. i. 17. † Heb. i. 3.

"rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: though I fall, I shall rise again." For—

3. The Redeemer has by Himself made a purgation of our sins. And hereby the power of death is rendered eventually harmless. To accomplish this end, and by it our happiness, the first step of His humiliation was most wonderful,—that is, uniting Himself to our nature; that very nature which, as to soul and body, was become obnoxious to eternal ruin. "Because the children" of the intended family "were partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through" His own "death He might," in pursuance of the amazing scheme, "destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil," who had authority to keep, as a jailor, the prisoners of the grave. Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness! Astonishing indeed is this work of the Redeemer! God was manifested in our flesh! or, as another apostle expresses it, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us!" In this humble state He obeyed the law which the first Adam had transgressed, and voluntarily exposed Himself to the penalty incurred. On account of His dignity as God over all, and the spotless purity of His human nature, His obedience unto death was infinitely valuable; and, in virtue of a federal union, became available to His people. His blood-shedding may be considered as the crowning part of his vicarious humiliation, and therefore He is represented as redeeming us by His blood. But even this, great as the work was, is not of itself sufficient for the full accomplishment of the Church's happiness. Hence—

4. He was to be, and actually is, head over all things to the Church, as to influence and government. What He hath done for us as our substitute becomes available for salvation only when applied. By His incarnation, our Lord assumed the common nature of man in order to effect a personal union to Himself; but by an exertion of His influence upon the Church as mediatorial head, the individual persons of His chosen are assumed, in order to effect a union of natures, which may be called a mystical union. Here is a great mystery: in the first instance, two natures constitute one person; in the second, two persons are constituted one by a new participation. This Divine Head becomes one with our common nature by assumption; but becomes one with His chosen by communication. Our nature He once took; His own He successively bestows. As the Father, Jehovah, has life in Himself, so

He hath given to the Son, as Mediator, to have life in Himself; and, according to eternal purpose, to quicken whom He will. In this capacity He received power over all flesh, that He should bestow life eternal on as many as were federally given to Him.

In our way to happiness there were two obstacles which we never could have surmounted—namely, our want of conformity to law as a covenant requiring faultless obedience, which defect exposed us to punishment; and our want of conformity to the same law as holy, disqualifying the soul for enjoying happy fellowship with God. In the one case, we were condemned as guilty; in the other, rejected as vile. Now, in each of these respects Jesus interposed. By virtue of His atonement, guilt is removed, and by His Holy Spirit our enmity is slain. And the same Spirit of life that slays the enmity new-creates the mind. This Divine power, by means of the incorruptible seed of revealed truth, begets faith, hope, and joy, and sanctifies the whole person. In a word, we are justified in Him, and sanctified by Him.

But, admitting that the law of the Spirit of life from Christ is given to His Church, and to every member of it in the appointed succession, we must yet remember that man is to be governed by laws under that King, the sceptre of whose kingdom is a right sceptre; who in His majesty rides prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness. He is therefore Head over all things to the Church in order to promote its final happiness. The wrath of men and devils He so overrules as to promote His eternal praise; and the remainder of it, which would, as to its real tendency, overflow and overwhelm, He effectually restrains. But, alas! while His laws are infinitely wise and equitable, His own subjects are often ungrateful; those who professed subjection have been found traitors, and those who possessed the genuine spirit of allegiance have appeared in many respects unfaithful. Hence the necessity of His kingly office to rule in righteousness and mercy, to make His people willing in the day of His power, and to guard them from all danger. Therefore—

5. All enemies were to be put under His feet; all rule, all authority and power, whether inward or outward, must be *put down*. This last expression is, in our translation, somewhat ambiguous, as it might lead the mere English reader to suppose that Christ must lay down His own regency, or delegated authority and power. But the original word is unequivocal, and puts it out

of all doubt, as it signifies *to abolish or destroy.* And so it is rendered in the twenty-sixth verse:—"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." This denotes that Christ shall subjugate, crush, or destroy all opposing powers; even all the "heathen who rage, and the people who imagine a vain thing; the kings of the earth who set themselves, and the rulers who take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his Anointed, who say, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. But he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. For then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex [or trouble, or destroy] them in his sore displeasure."*

An eminent critic† considers this act as that of God the Father, "when He shall have put down all rule;" and again, "Christ must reign till He," that is, God, "hath put all enemies under His feet." And indeed the following verses appear to confirm this interpretation. Here, then, is a glorious intimation, that as Christ has power over all flesh, possesses all authority in heaven and earth to break the rebellious with a rod of iron, and to dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel, so the Father engages, by concurrent authority and power, to put all enemies under the Saviour's feet. "But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted who did put all things under him." He who delegates another is not himself subject to the delegated person. And when all things shall be subdued unto the Divine Mediator, then shall He also Himself be under a kind of subjection. Of what kind this will be comes now to be considered, while we contemplate—

III. The *consummation* of Christ's mediatorial kingdom. "Then cometh the end," that is, not only the end of the world, but the consummation of that work which Christ undertook. Overtures of mercy will no more be made, a state of probation is for ever closed. The dead shall be raised, the judgment set, and the books opened. Then shall every one receive according to what he hath done in the body, whether good or evil. Then shall the incarnate Judge openly declare, "Behold I, and the children which God hath given me." The last enemy is destroyed. The whole undertaken business is finished. Then shall He deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, or God essentially, from whom He received

* Ps. ii. 1–5.

† Bengelius; *vide* Gnomon Nov. Test. in loc.

it. Now the Son himself will be subject, that God may be "all in all."

Here is exhibited a final state in which the intermediate reign of Christ terminates, and a transcendent glory in which all others are absorbed! All mediatory means are everlastingly set aside, or rather irretrievably gone with the past moments of time! All subservient plans are completed! The ample plan, the infinitely significant parenthesis in the page of God's dominion, is passed over; and the last, the best order of things, now commences. Christ the head, with His mystical body the Church, and elect angels, stand on the rock of unchanging love, settled in ultimate perfection.

When the Son is represented as entering into "subjection," and God as "all in all," it does not imply that the Redeemer's glory will be diminished; nor does it intimate that the effect of His mediatory offices will ever cease to flow. On the contrary, in a sense, the offices themselves will be perpetual; for He shall "*reign* for ever"—of His kingdom there shall be "no end." He is also a "*Priest* for ever," according to the power of an endless life. And it will be through Him, the great *Prophet*, that the Divine excellences will be eternally manifested to His glorified people.

Be it, therefore, observed that while the Son is in one respect subject, there will be glories and an empire which He will retain. For as the Father did not resign His essential glory and government when the mediatory reign commenced, so neither will Emmanuel resign what is essential to Him at the close of it. As, notwithstanding all power in heaven and earth was committed to the Saviour, the Father and the Holy Spirit concur and co-operate in the same work until all enemies are put under His feet; so, though God shall be "all in all," the Son's co-operating in maintaining the honours and happiness of the glorified state will not cease, nor will His dignity and splendour be lessened. But more particularly—

1. Whatever excellence or honour Christ had from eternity He will still retain with unabated effulgence. The glories of Emmanuel are twofold—essential and acquired. When He claims the highest bliss for His disciples, His language is, "Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." This refers to His mediatorial glory, conferred upon Him in conse-

quence of His voluntary humiliation,—a glory which He will always retain, and which will prove one eternal source of happiness to His people in the heavenly state. But from the same connexion we learn that He possessed a glory prior to creation:—"And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." Who can question that what He had in common with the Father before time shall continue to exist when time shall be no more? But that the declared subjection of the Son to the Father does not denote any diminution of His real dignity and glory, that it is perfectly compatible with His Divine excellence uneclipsed, and refers only to a relative, official, or economical change, on account of His mediatorial kingdom being then completed, may appear if we consider that—

2. He will be the object of adoration after that period without any abatement. I say more: that will be the period when the praises of men and angels will acquire fresh vigour. For now *He* whose worth was infinite and eternal has performed a stupendous work; the Divine Ambassador has completed, to entire satisfaction, His undertaking; the "Captain of our salvation," who is "Lord of lords, and King of kings," having been faithful in every part of His commission, kindles a flame of love and adoration in every breast. If this be the Divine mandate, on a portion of His work being completed, "Let all the angels of God worship Him," how much more energy will it acquire when the whole is gloriously closed! And we are assured that the same honour will be ascribed to Him for ever:—"I beheld," saith a true witness, "and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature that is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever." *

In another place the words, as to our present purpose, are, if possible, still more emphatic:—"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us

* Rev. v. 11–13.

kings and priests unto God and his Father; to *him* be glory and *dominion* for ever and ever." * Thus, you observe, He who is the faithful Witness, the First-begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth, has not only glory, but also dominion, ascribed to Him by all the redeemed family without end. Yes, my brethren, the Son of God was adored when the angelic morning stars assembled and sang together in sweetest harmony, as they proceeded from His all-forming hand; and He will continue to be the object of their adoration, clothed with our nature, through the revolving ages of eternity. Add to this, that—

3. As the effect of His work and kingdom, the Redeemer will have unutterable joy. Then, in an eminent degree, shall He "behold the travail of His soul, and be satisfied." He shall be full of joy peculiar to Himself as Mediator; nor is it ever to be resigned or lessened. Besides, reviewing the myriads rescued from the power of sin and woe, He will "rejoice over them with singing, and rest in His love." So far, therefore, will the subjection of the Son be from diminishing His joy, that subsequent to that period it will be promoted, in that nature wherein alone it is capable of increase. Strange would be the supposition, that the increased glory and happiness of the redeemed should be accompanied by a diminution of the same on the part of their Redeemer! But permit me now to call your attention to—

IV. The force of the apostle's reasoning on this wonderful economy of the Divine plan, in favour of the great Christian doctrine of the *saints' resurrection.* Few who admit the truth of Christianity will hesitate to avow that this is one of its fundamental doctrines. To this redemption of the body all Christian hope is directed. Without this we have no satisfactory evidence that even the soul can partake of salvation; since the truth of the Christian religion itself stands or falls with it. "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith," or belief of the gospel, and even the gospel itself, "is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God," and should be treated as impostors, "because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not," seeing the connexion between the two facts, the resurrection of Christ as the

* Rev. i. 5, 6.

first-fruit, and of the saints as the full harvest, is inseparable. "If the dead rise not, ... we are yet in our sins." There is no sufficient evidence of a ransom paid, or that the gospel claims God for its author, and consequently no salvation from sin and death. But more particularly—

1. The eternal God has pledged His word, has pledged *Himself*, that He will put all enemies under the Mediator's feet. Many enemies He has, and the enemies of His people He regards as His own. But all of them shall be made to submit, whether foes within or foes without,—enemies to the souls or to the bodies of the saints. But how can this be accomplished if death be not destroyed? And how can death be destroyed but by a resurrection? Death, like a voracious monster, has swallowed his millions in every age; and while the tombs are shut, which enclose them, he must be considered as a victor—an enemy in triumph. But irresistible and universal as have been this enemy's conquest, he *must* be subdued, when the Saviour's energetic, all-quickening voice shall cleave the tombs, and raise the redeemed prisoners from under his power. He who in the days of His weakness proclaimed, "Lazarus, come forth," will, in the day of His power and final triumph, awake the nations underground, and literally realise the vision of Ezekiel: *—"Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones, Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: and I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord. . . . . And the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. . . . . And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live: . . . . then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord."

2. The *nature* of Christ's kingdom requires the resurrection of all His subjects. His work must be complete. To deliver up an imperfect kingdom comports not with the dignity of His person, the extent of His power, or His fidelity to His chosen. What! a perfect, almighty Redeemer deliver up the kingdom with His Church incomplete, and mutilated by an enemy? It cannot be.

* Ezek. xxxvii.

And yet this would be the case were there no resurrection of the body made like unto Christ's glorious body. Yes, these vile bodies He can, and will, change and make like unto His own, by virtue of that mighty power whereby He is able to subdue all things to Himself. "Then cometh the end," and then shall come to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory! O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" "Then shall this corruptible put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality!" My brethren, let the realising view, and animating consideration of this great doctrine be more familiar to us. Look at the blessed servants of God in past ages, and you will find of what vast importance it was to them. This emboldened the apostles when exposed to deaths often, and the noble army of martyrs who despised the tortures of their persecutors, and would not accept deliverance because they expected a resurrection to a better life.

Now, then, if God's word is to be relied upon, that God who cannot lie, whose testimony has been confirmed by so many miracles and incontestable proofs,—who is too wise to be mistaken, too good to deceive us, to powerful to be frustrated in His purpose, and too faithful to suffer our expectation, founded on His word, to perish, —the sleeping dead shall rise. Ye saints of the most high, though after your skin worms shall have destroyed those bodies, yet, assuredly, in your glorified flesh shall ye see your Saviour-God. In a word, if it be the plan of Divine Providence to make the present state of things terminate in the perfection of a people whom God hath chosen, and to put all enemies, not one excepted, under the feet of the King of Zion, there must be a resurrection of all the bodies once inhabited by the children of grace, in forms unutterably glorious.

Ye servants of the living God, does the greatness of this fact put your faith to a stand, or the manner of it confound your imagination? But why should it be thought a thing incredible, that He who made the world of things that were not as yet, and the innumerable millions of its living tribes out of the common mass of earth or water, should raise our dead bodies to life again? With what infinite ease can He who upholds all things by the word of His power, and produces the inconceivably numerous and various changes, which are so many instances of life from the dead, call up our sleeping dust, however scattered and intermixed

before, into a living and glorious form. No doubt, my brethren, if death be an enemy, and if every enemy and opposing power must be subdued and disarmed; if our Divine Saviour is to deliver up a complete and not a mutilated kingdom, a finished not an imperfect work; and if it be alike the office of the Son and the irreversible decree of the Father so to do,—we have the strongest reasons and the brightest evidence that heart can desire, that our bodies shall be redeemed from under the power of death and the grave. O blessed hope! O ravishing prospect! Who can duly estimate an eternal weight of glory! Oh that this may be our happy lot!

Before I close this discourse permit a word of exhortation. Our subject is full of encouragement to some and of terror to others.

On the humble follower of Christ, it calls to face every difficulty with fortitude, and to bear every trial of his pilgrimage with resignation. All the enemies of his Lord and Master shall, with disappointment and rage, bite the dust. No weapon formed against him shall prosper. Fear not the forerunners of death, his bended bow or levelled arrows. Fear not the bitter pangs, the dark vale, the hollow tomb, the dismal house appointed for all living; for the Lord is risen indeed. The second Adam is a quickening spirit: by His Holy Spirit even now He dwelleth in us, and at the appointed period He will quicken our mortal bodies. Though we know not what we shall be, though we know not the degree of glory in which the body shall appear when raised, or the precise mode of effecting it, this we know from the surest grounds, that when Christ shall appear we shall be like Him. A difference indeed among the glorified there will be; for as one star differeth from another star in magnitude and brilliancy, so shall be the resurrection of the dead. But each of the righteous shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of our Father, and all reflect the glory of Him who will be *all in all.*

What obligations are we under to our God for discoveries so momentous, and grounds of hope so satisfactory! In this part of Divine revelation we find the first, the middle, and the last things. While mere philosophy, too self-satisfied to be reformed, and too wise to be instructed, labours hard, but labours in vain, to account even for the present state of persons and things, the sacred oracles place in open view a state of primitive perfection, that of media-

torial government and grace, and that of transcendent glory yet in reserve,—not by the glimmering light of conjecture, but by evidence the most infallible.

In this awful subject we have an argument of no common weight against the notion of universal deliverance out of hell. Those who maintain the doctrine of Universal Restoration, as it is called, teach us to expect that all men and devils, sooner or later, shall be delivered from the prison of hell, and promoted to the regions of bliss. Answers to this hypothesis, to my own thoughts conclusive, crowd upon my mind; but at present I shall only request you to look at it through the medium of the subject now discussed. Liberation from *guilt* can take place only by an act of *forgiveness*, administered not only through the merits, but also by the hands of a Mediator. And freedom from a depraved temper can be effected only by Divine influence, imparted not only for the sake, but also by the mediatorial will of the Divine head of influence. He who denies either of these positions saps the foundation of Christianity. But he who pleads for Universal Restoration denies both. He must maintain that both justification and sanctification may be produced without any immediate act of Christ; even after He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God absolutely. The sentiment is likely to be countenanced from two quarters: the speculative necessarian, who denies all supernatural influence on the mind for generating a holy disposition; and the speculative believer of Scripture doctrines who has low thoughts of sin. The former should be reasoned with on other grounds; but the latter, who may approve in general of the doctrine contained in this discourse, should be classed with those who have but mean thoughts of sin and holiness. That their notion is more honourable to the Divine government and character, is a position which they are forward to advance, but which I believe is utterly false. Ours is not inconsistent with either equity or benevolence, rightly defined; whereas theirs impeaches the Divine veracity, tending at the same time to subvert the very nature and design of Christ's mediatorial kingdom.

To conclude: is there a thoughtless trifler before me, whose whole temper and life proves that he lives without hope, without Christ, and without God in the world? My address to you will be but short: may God by it make an impression strong and lasting! Hear, then, O trifler with God and thy own soul, what

thou doest do quickly! "Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near." "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." Restoration from hell and the second death is but a *dream*,—a dream of busy and bold theorists, who compliment the Deity with a false benevolence, to the injury of His other attributes, and the subversion of His government. That the dream is pleasing is no criterion of its reality; for who ever espoused falsehood without being pleased with it? Once more, then, take a review of the Mediator's kingdom. While this lasts, He is a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance and remission, grace and glory; but when He giveth up the kingdom to God in His absolute character,—O tremendous thought!—pardon of sin, reconciliation to God, and friendship with Him are for ever excluded! O deluded sinner, can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong in that fearful day, when He who made thee will not have mercy on thee, and He that formed thee will shew thee no favour? I say again, what thou doest, do quickly. "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and thou perish from the way, while his wrath is kindled but a little." But, "blessed are all they who put their trust in Him." He will be their friend in life, their guardian in death; He will raise them in glory at the last day, and be their eternal salvation. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

SERMON IV.

PREDESTINATION TO LIFE.

MATTHEW xx. 23.

"But to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father."

THE subject appointed for this morning's discourse* is *predestination to life;* by which I understand God's eternal purpose, or decree, to deliver some of the human race out of a state of sin and death, guilt and misery, and to promote them to righteousness and life, purity and obedience, and in the world to come eternal glory.

The words I have chosen as the foundation of my discourse appear to me well adapted for the purpose. They were occasioned by an application of a female disciple, (Salome, the wife of Zebedee,) according to St Matthew,† but according to St Mark,‡ of the two sons of that disciple, who were James and John, to the Lord Jesus Christ. The object of the petition is, that James and John may sit, one on His right hand, and the other on His left, in His glorious kingdom. Our Lord had often intimated that great privileges awaited His followers, and especially the apostles;§ and now they take courage, with the interest of their mother united to their own, to present their aspiring petition in form. Thus the two evangelists may be easily and fairly reconciled by supposing that they were *all* concerned. And when we consider that Salome was one of the pious women who attended our Saviour in His travels, and that her sons, James (the elder) and John (the evangelist) had been honoured with a sight of His transfiguration on

* This and the preceding sermon were preached before an Association of Ministers.

† Ver. 20–24. ‡ Chap. x. 35–41. § Matt. xix. 28.

Mount Tabor,* which was an indication of peculiar friendship, it may account, perhaps, for the freedom of the application, though nothing can justify the measure.

Our Lord's reply at first is indirect, "Ye know not what ye ask." Though you have attended me so long, and have had sufficient opportunities to learn, you seem, both mother and sons, by this your application, to mistake the nature of my kingdom. "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They, thoughtlessly enough, and with a sufficient stock of self-confidence, replied, "We are able." As to the point of your ability, where it lies, future experience will be the most effectual teacher. However, it is a fact,—"Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with;"—trials await you, as my disciples, similar to my own; "but (δὲ) to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but (ἀλλὰ) it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father."

This is a more direct answer to the question: as if He had said, The kind and degree of honour for my disciples in my kingdom is a matter *already settled.* Such favours are according to God's eternal counsels and predestinating love; and, as Dr Guyse well expresses it, "are put into my hands to confer them, not according to any private will of my own, but according to His purpose who hath given me power over all flesh, that I should give eternal life to as many as He has given me;† so that these honours are not mine to give save only to them for whom they have been prepared by my Father, in His appointments before the foundation of the world."

It has been observed by the best critics, that the Greek particle‡ is taken sometimes exceptively; and denotes not only *but,* an adversative conjunction, but also *except,* or *unless,* or *save;* and the passage might be well rendered without the supplementary words of our translation, "it shall be given to them," thus: *It is not mine to give, except to them* for whom *it is prepared.* To them, indeed, it is mine to give; but to no others. Neither favour, nor friendship, nor contingent circumstances, as men call

* Chap. xvii. 1, &c. † John xvii. 2.

‡ "Ἀλλὰ, *exceptive* significans *nisi, præterquam,* idque vel absolute, vel sequente vocula ἤ. Marc. ix. 8; 1 Cor. iii. 5. Ita et Matt. xx. 23."—*Stockii Clavis.* See also Dr Guyse's note.

them, nor anything else, can deprive the one, or advance the other.

The subject before us is indeed awful, and therefore the discussion of it should be attended with reverence. It is a doctrine liable to be abused by men of corrupt minds, though its avowed friends, and therefore should be guarded by suitable *cautions;*—it is a doctrine highly interesting and important, and therefore should not be passed over slightly, but the *evidence* of it should be fairly discussed, and as closely as the limits of a single sermon will admit;—it is a doctrine to which many *objections* may be, and frequently are, made, and therefore it may be proper to consider the chief of them;—and, finally, as the doctrine has been sometimes called a speculative nicety, I would attempt a refutation of the charge by a *practical* improvement of it.

I. I shall offer some observations by way of caution, in order to guard this glorious doctrine from abuse. Observe, then—

1. That when we contend for this doctrine as a truth, it should be viewed in connexion with its real importance. These two objects are extremely different in things natural, civil, and religious. There are many things true in history, in philosophy, in politics, and even in theology, which no sober person deems important. There are other things hypothetically important, whether actually true or not. And of this kind is the subject before us. Such is the nature, the connexion, and consequences of it, that if it be true, it cannot fail being of the first importance.

But how are we more particularly to estimate the importance of this subject? By the influence which the admission or the denial of it has on the very foundations of religion. For instance, if it be not true, either man himself, or mere chance, has the principal share in effecting our actual salvation, and investing us with eternal glory. Some, indeed, are so lost to modesty and self-knowledge, and so unacquainted with the leading truths of Christianity, that they do not scruple to ascribe the eternal difference in our future state, whether good or bad, to man himself, but attended with some verbal unmeaning compliment to Divine mercy. Such persons should first learn the rudiments of Christianity, before they presume to expect that any deference will be shewn to their opinions. On the other hand, if this be true, its utility is plain: it will hide pride from man,—it will exclude

chance from having any share in our deliverance,—it will exalt the grace of God,—it will render salvation a certain, and not a precarious thing,—and, in a word, it will secure to those who have the Spirit of Christ the greatest consolation.

This was the view which our Episcopal Reformers had of the doctrine, both as to its truth and the importance of it. "Predestination to life," say they, "is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour. . . . The godly consideration of predestination, and our election in Christ, is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh, and their earthly members, and drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things, as well because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal salvation to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their love towards God." * Another observation I would make is—

2. That it is highly proper, in order to investigate the present subject with success, to keep it perfectly distinct and free from all impure mixtures. This is what some of our early Reformers and many of the modern defenders of this doctrine have not done. For want of this, many bitter enemies have opposed it. Dr Whitby, for instance, and most who have written on the same side of the question since his time, place predestination to death, or reprobation to misery, as the very foundation of Calvinism, and inseparable from predestination to life. But so far is predestination to death from being true, that nothing can be more untrue. It is but an arbitrary assumption; a foreign impure mixture, having no foundation either in the real meaning of Holy Writ, or in the nature of things, except, indeed, we mean by it, what no one questions, a determination to punish the guilty.†

But is not one man's misery as certain as another man's happiness? Yes; equally certain. What then; must they therefore be equally predestinated? No. But how can a thing be certain

* Articles agreed upon by the Archbishops and Bishops of both provinces, and the whole Clergy, in Convocation holden at London, 1562; Art. xvii.

† See Note A in Appendix to Vol. I.

if it be not predestinated? Now here there is a previous question. Does God predestinate to sin as the means, and to death or misery as the end, in the same way as He predestinates to holiness as the means, and eternal glory as the end? This we deny, as it would be infinitely unworthy of God, making Him the author of sin, or doing evil that good may come. Some, indeed, have distinguished between being the author or the cause of sin, and being a sinner. But the distinction itself is not solid, nor could it fully satisfy those who have made it in clearing the Divine character.*

In fact, sin and holiness are not only different but opposite effects, and equally opposite are their causes; but as God is the sole cause, the sole exclusive cause of holiness, the creature, in some way, must be the sole and exclusive cause of sin. If you ask how; I reply, by exercising his liberty, which is a mere natural instrument, on himself, rather than on God. But how came he to do that? By his *passive power*. What is passive power? In general, it is that which distinguishes the creature from the Creator. But more particularly, it is that tendency to nothing as to being, and to defection as to well-being, which is essential to every created existence. If every creature have, and must of necessity have, this passive power, you will ask, how came the holy angels, and the spirits of the just, not to sin? The answer is, because Divine grace upholds them. These things duly considered, though briefly stated, will shew, that as God is not the author of sin, so neither has He predestinated sin. He is the author and cause of good only. He is the author of our liberty; but that in itself is not evil. And He is the author of our nature as limited; that also of itself is no moral evil. But when our liberty unites with this limited nature, or terminates on passive power, when this latter is not controlled by grace, their offspring is imperfect, or sinfulness attaches to our moral acts.

Hence you may learn, that sin and future misery are events perfectly certain, though not predestinated. It has been often assumed, but without propriety or truth, that an event is foreknown only because it is decreed. In reality all *good* is foreknown, because it is decreed; for there is no other ground of its existence. But sin, as before shewn, has another ground of existence—namely, passive power; which can no more be an object of predestination

* See Note B in Appendix to Vol. I.

or decree than its perfect opposite, the all-sufficiency of Jehovah. Yet, observe attentively, this has its *proper nature*, and God sees all things, and all essences, in their proper nature. What! does not God foreknow the sinfulness of any event in its *deficient* cause, as well as the goodness of another in that which is efficient? Besides, passive power in union with liberty is an adequate, a fully adequate ground of sin and death; and therefore to introduce a predestination of sin and death, is to ascribe to God what is equally impious and needless.* Let us, therefore, keep this doctrine free from all impure mixtures. And now to proceed to—

3. A third observation, which is, When the end is maintained to be infallibly certain, the means to promote that end are included. Thus you may suppose a chain suspended from a great height, the lowest link of which bears a heavy weight. You do not suppose that this link is unconnected with the next, and so on till you come to the highest. Every one of the links is equally necessary with that which is next the weight; and the whole is connected with something else which is stronger than the weight, including that of the chain also, however long and heavy. The weight is the end, the links from first to last are the means, and the invisible support, the Divine sovereign, decretive will.

Thus also in the cultivation of our land, though it is decreed that on such a field there shall be this very season a crop of wheat, this was not independent of providential virtue giving the increase, the genial showers, the solar warmth, and the vivifying air. It is not unconnected with the proper seed sown, needful tillage, ploughing and harrowing, and the quality of the soil. The same holds true as to the health of the body, and the prolongation of life to an appointed period. He who dies must first have life; he who grows to manhood must arrive at it through the previous stages of youth, childhood, and infancy. So likewise in the education of our children: if learning be the end, that supposes the previous means of application; and if it is determined who shall be the first scholar of the age in which he lives, it is equally determined that he shall begin with the rudiments of letters, and diligently prosecute his literary studies. And respecting religious attainments, the matter is equally plain: if life or eternal glory be the end predestinated, the previous steps of purity of heart, justification

* See Note C in Appendix to Vol. I.

and a new birth unto righteousness, preservation in Christ, and every individual event and circumstance preceding, is included in the decree, as far as there is any goodness in them. As to the evil with which any events or circumstances are blended, that has been already accounted for on another principle. Nothing can be more true or plain, than that God had predestinated an everlasting righteousness to be brought in by the Lord Jesus Christ. But is it not equally true and plain that the birth of Jesus and of His virgin mother, the existence of David, the call of Abraham, the preservation of Noah, and the creation of Adam and Eve were predestinated? Let us, therefore, guard against separating the end and the means; and what God joins together in His predestinating care and love, let no man put asunder.

II. We now come to consider some proofs of this doctrine. That the Scriptures, especially those of the New Testament, *appear*, at least, to maintain the doctrine in question, no person of common modesty will deny. Thus, for instance :—"Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son."* Again :—"According as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love : having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace."† And again :—"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."‡ Believers are said to be called according to God's *purpose;* and certain discriminations are made between man and man, between nation and nation, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calleth. "The *election* hath obtained it." "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."

These are some of the many passages of Holy Writ which at least seem to hold this doctrine. But it is of importance to observe,

* Rom. viii. 29, 30. † Eph. i. 4–6. ‡ Ver. 11.

that to establish this very doctrine is the main drift of the apostle Paul's elaborate argument in a considerable part of his Epistle to the Romans.* But more particularly—

1. It is evidently inconsistent with God's infinite perfection to suppose that He has *no* purposes, designs, nor aims in His operations; or, which is virtually the same thing, to suppose that He decrees or predestinates *nothing*. Wherein would He then differ from blind, unmeaning chance, which hath neither wisdom, power, nor properties? An intelligent spirit without any plan or purpose is inconceivable; much less is the infinitely-perfect Jehovah such a Being.

But if He purposes anything, what can be conceived of in this world of higher importance, or more worthy of His predestinating care, than the *salvation* of His people, that is, of those who are eventually saved? Shall He purpose from eternity to give His Son to appear in the form of a servant, to suffer an ignominious death, and to be Head over all things to the Church, at an *uncertainty?* Does He bestow His Holy Spirit without knowing, or without intending, who shall be ultimately changed into the Divine image from glory to glory, and made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light? Assuredly, if in time He draws with loving-kindness, it is because He has loved with an everlasting love.

2. What Scripture and experience teach of man's *condition as a sinner* utterly excludes every other cause of salvation but God's predestinating love. From our very birth we are sinful, guilty, and without strength. The carnal mind is enmity against God. The graceless heart is a heart of stone; in spiritual concerns unfeeling and inpenetrable. Well may our Lord say to His disciples, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." If, then, those who were dead in trespasses and sins have been quickened, if persecutors have been arrested and alarmed, if those who were fully bent on rebellion have been at once rendered humble, meek, loving, and obedient, to what can we rationally ascribe it but to the discriminating and sovereign pleasure of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will? If such are not predestinated, how came they to be called, converted, and regenerated?

Consult the good man's experience. Will he coolly and deliberately arrogate anything to himself? Follow him to the throne of grace; what is his language before God? Listen to his most

* Rom. ix.–xi.

holy, happy, and animated praises in the church. Attend to him in his happiest frames, or when emerging from the deep waters of affliction,—when restored from backslidings, or with faltering speech on the brink of eternity,—and you will find him steady to one point:—"Behold, *God is my salvation.* My recovery from sin and woe is all of grace." Follow him to heaven, when he joins the noble army of martyrs, and the countless myriads of the redeemed from among men, and there he is heard exclaiming, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." If we search eternally into the origin and cause of our deliverance from sin, and our exaltation to happiness and glory, none can be found but God's predestinating love.

3. Nothing short of eternal predestination could secure that which is demonstrably the most worthy, the most glorious, the most real end of God in the salvation of man,—that is, the praise of the glory of His grace. No end can be compared to this in excellence. It is expressly the end which God has proposed to Himself in the salvation of His people: "having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace." If there be no predestination, how can such an end ever be proposed, and how infallibly secured? Can there be any effect without an adequate cause? or can the invention of men or angels discover any other cause than predestination.

On any other supposition, how can Divine love, grace, and mercy be glorified, *infallibly* glorified? Is the honour of these glorious and blessed perfections of Jehovah to be suspended on a feeble peradventure? Or is the spiritual temple constructed of some materials which come by chance, or approach of themselves, while others are brought forth by a Divine hand out of the quarry of nature, and placed on the living foundation? Is the glory of the Creator to depend upon the precarious will of man? The supposition is too absurd to admit a thought. Again—

4. Predestination to life is essentially necessary to secure the full end of the death of Christ, and the efficacy of Divine influence. What though He laid down His life for His sheep, if after all He

do not bring them into His fold? For Him to lay down His life a ransom for many, and then leave it to them whether they should come for life, and all the benefits of His death, righteousness and grace, is to suppose them possessed of more power than Adam had before the fall. For the power he needed was only that which might keep him from falling; but the power which fallen man requires is that by which he may rise from his fallen state, and enter into the favour of God, into union with Christ, into spiritual sensibility and life, into wisdom, righteousness, and holiness, and into eternal glory. Now what can be adequate to this but omnipotent power helping our infirmities?

If it be said, Though we cannot of ourselves do this, may we not through Christ and His Holy Spirit assisting us? I reply, assistance is of two kinds. It is either affording us proper means, such as the Holy Scriptures, the ministry of the word, ordinances of religion, and precious promises, by way of encouragement; or it is actually to influence the mind by supernatural agency. The former kind of assistance never secures, nor can secure, any saving or even moral effect, as might be easily proved, were this the proper place. If the latter assistance be afforded, the event is secured; for nothing is requisite to secure the volitions, and all the exercises of the will, in faith, repentance, love, hope, and even perseverance therein unto the end, but this kind of influence to a certain degree. But does God impart any gracious influence without purposing so to do? And does He not know what influence is necessary to secure the end? Without predestination to life, what security can there be that the death of Christ will not prove abortive and unavailing?

The notion that a sufficient degree of grace is given to all, but that a degree more than sufficient is given to the elect; that all the elect are certainly and infallibly saved, but the others left in uncertainty, with a *perhaps* that some of them may be saved in addition to the elect,—this notion is neither founded in revealed truth, nor capable of rational consistency.*

Without predestination to life, the influences of the Holy Spirit, which, it is confessed, are given to some, might be given in vain, or without effecting any saving purpose in any one of the human race. Where, then, could be the wisdom of a dispensation of the Spirit, or of communicating the influence of grace? Does God

* See Note D in Appendix to Vol. I.

foresee that some will be so good and pliable as to improve a common favour in such a way, and to such a degree, as to constitute the difference between them and others that perish? But where is this divinity taught, and by whom is it sanctioned? It is not sanctioned by the patriarchs and prophets, by Christ and His apostles; nor is it contained in the words of inspiration, or even in the tablet of unsophisticated reason.

5. Setting aside this doctrine, or supposing it not true, what room is left for a covenant of grace between the Father, Son, and Spirit? Has not the Father given to the Son a people for whom He should be obedient unto death, for whom He should give His life a ransom, for whom He should rise, live, and reign till all His enemies be subdued, and to whom Christ has engaged to give eternal life? If we reject predestination to life, what meaning is there in His office of surety? Is not Jesus a surety for His people? But what is a surety? It is one who undertakes for another. What does Jesus undertake to do? He undertakes not only to become incarnate for them, to obey the law, to endure the contradiction of sinners and comply with the demands of equity; but also to justify many, to give them life, to keep them from every rapacious hand, to purify them by His blood, to save them from sin and hell, and to bring them to the beatific vision of His glory.

In a word, take away this doctrine, and you take away the foundation of God, the foundation of His covenant, the foundation of His temple, the church, the foundation of the saints' hope and joy. But, blessed be God, His foundation stands sure, having this seal, "The Lord knoweth them that are His." Known unto God are all His ways, and all His people from the beginning. Blind chance and impotent free-will shall never be the partners of His throne.

III. We proceed to notice some objections which may be and often are made to this doctrine. And—

1. If this doctrine be true, it is urged by some, God would then be an arbitrary being, and partial in His determinations. This objection supposes that God has no right to be so; yet, on the contrary, nothing appears more worthy of Him than to exercise arbitrary power, and to manifest partiality. No such right is vested in man, as to do what he pleases, while he disdains to

consult any other will than his own. But whose will besides His own can the infinitely perfect God consult? "Who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory for ever."

Let us appeal to facts. Are there not marks of high sovereignty and holy partiality through universal nature? Are they not visible in the heavens above and in this lower world. Is there not a greater light that rules the day, and the lesser lights that rule the night? and does not one star differ from another star in glory? Are not these marks visible in the operations of providence, in the persons of men, their corporeal forms and mental endowments? Are they not constantly seen in the history of nations, the changes of empires, and the dispensations of grace to different tribes of men? How conspicuous is this in God's conduct towards Abraham and his posterity for a series of ages, and afterwards in the calling of the Gentiles! And how becoming in us to adopt the same language with the apostle Paul on that occasion:—"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" And is not the same partiality visible at this very day? Yet is He holy in all His works and righteous in all His ways.

2. It is objected, If this doctrine be true, then is a man reduced to a mere machine. No. A mere machine has no sensibility, no consciousness, no reason, and no will. But he is acted upon, they say, and therefore not an agent. Is it, then, essential to an agent not to be acted upon? Then there is but one agent in the universe; for everything but the first cause is acted upon more or less. The fact is, there is no contrariety in these two things. Angels and men are acted upon, yet they are moral agents. The holy agency upon them respects chiefly their disposition itself, but the agency they exert is the exercise of their faculties, will, and disposition. Whether their disposition be good or bad, still they are agents. If this be made good, it must be by sovereign influence; and then the agency and choice will be good; but if this be bad, the agency is bad too.

But granting to the objector that the objects of predestination are, in the sense now mentioned, machines, or instruments in the hand of Divine sovereignty; what then? I fain would know

what better lot can be assigned us than to be instruments in the hand of a predestinating God? I solemnly protest that I desire no better, no other lot. And who can describe the nature of this high privilege! "This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise." Oh the blessedness of being entirely passive in the hand of that God who predestinates nothing but good! Has that man any reason to complain who is restrained from wickedness, but compelled to embrace happiness? Then, say some, his will would be forced. No. This by no means follows. My people, saith the Lord, shall be willing in the day of my power. Surely God can impart His Holy Spirit without forcing the will. And let there be but the active, regenerating, renewing presence of this Divine agent changing the temper of the mind, the choice of good will be no more compelled, nor the will no more forced, than in the most free acts of which the human mind is capable.

3. This doctrine, it is said, tends to licentiousness. This is an assertion which has been often made, but, I apprehend, never fairly proved; for it is contrary to universal experience. Turn your eyes to a vast army, headed by experienced officers,—what is the language of nature and experience? You uniformly find great generals anxious to impress the sentiment on the minds of their troops that they are destined to victory. What gives rise to this kind of oratory? What is the philosophy of such a rhetoric? It is founded in the nature of man, and confirmed by the experience of ages, that confidence in a favourable issue animates exertion. Consult a serious Christian, who, through a long pilgrimage, has believed this doctrine. Will he deliberately tell you that it has this tendency, or that he has found this effect in his own experience? No, he will tell you nothing gives him more courage and vigour against sin. It is not when in a dry, backsliding frame of mind, or when verging to licentiousness, that he can rest on this doctrine; but when he is most resolved for God and heaven, when most diligent in the highway of holiness. Then, indeed, he can say, I know that all things work together for my good; my predestination includes conformity to Christ, my calling, my justification, and warfare against sin. If God be for me, who can be against me? Who shall lay anything to my charge? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, is risen, and maketh intercession. Who shall separate me from

the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or nakedness, or famine, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things I am more than conqueror through him that loved me. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus my Lord.

4. Some would insinuate, that though this doctrine be true, yet it should not be preached, because it is a secret in the mind of God. But I hope it has been proved, that as a *doctrine* it is not a secret, but is revealed in the Holy Scriptures and supported by the soundest arguments. The objects, indeed, or the persons who are predestinated, are known to God only before they bear fruit. By their fruits *we* can come to know them in the ordinary course of things; nor is it any part of the doctrine asserted that it belongs to man to ascertain the individual object any further than by character.

But there are other ends to be answered by this doctrine. To be in the way to eternal glory is an unspeakable privilege, and it is the proper part of a Christian to inquire into the cause of it. His own humility and gratitude are involved in it. The honour of God, the wisdom of His counsel, and the lustre of His grace,—the offices of Christ, the surety of a better covenant, and the good Shepherd of the sheep,—His powerful intercession, and His government over all things to the Church,—all are included in the proper declaration of this truth. Once more—

5. This doctrine, it may be said, is dangerous, in proportion as it is insisted upon, in that it prevents the more needful inquiry, "Am I born again?" Yes, there would be danger, if *all* the attention of ministers and people, or even a disproportionate share of it, were confined to this. But, mistaken objector, because there are corrupt men disposed to turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, would you rob any child of God of this holy triumph, "He will choose our inheritance for us! The Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance. For the Lord is our defence, the Holy One of Israel is our King. I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song, he also is become my salvation." For the same reason that we ought not to be ashamed of the gospel of Christ, we need not, we ought not, to be ashamed of this doctrine.

IV. I would now offer a few practical uses of the subject. And—

1. This doctrine is a source of great comfort when contrasted with the fickleness of men and the perpetual vicissitudes of the world. The lot may be cast, but the Lord is the disposer of it. He worketh all things after the counsel of His own will. His counsel shall stand, and He doeth, and will do, all His pleasure. The wrath of man shall praise Him, and the remainder of wrath He will restrain. All things work together for good to them who love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.

After viewing the present perturbed state of the world, the revolutions of empires, the devastations of war, the alarms of invasion, the degradation of some, and the exaltation of other characters, how pleasing and consolatory to view a steady hand overruling, guiding, and influencing all! Providence is "as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel." But how delightful to reflect that within these perpetually-revolving wheels there is an immovable centre! God's aim is steady. He is of one mind; who can turn Him? And He doeth all things well.

My Christian friends, when tired with the sights and rehearsals of confusion, depravity, and guilt, of horrible disgusting scenes, with which this world so much abounds, and conscious that your heavenly Father has power supreme, and goodness infinite, and that His mercy endureth for ever towards them who love Him,—conscious, too, that nothing befalls you from His appointment but what is perfective of your nature to your everlasting felicity,—how delightful the privilege of reposing in His arms, of contemplating His gracious designs, and of inferring with infallible certainty that an incorruptible and unfading inheritance awaits you after death! Reflect, besides, that where sin abounds, grace does much more abound in the dispensations of God; that from the ruins of our nature, in virtue of the Divine predestination asserted, a glorious temple rises, for a habitation of God through the Spirit; and that the purposes of sovereign love more than counterbalance all the miseries in the universe! Let us comfort one another with these thoughts.

2. As the predestination for which we contend is only to good, it affords the most pleasing view of the Divine character. God is love. In Him is no such inconsistency as is but too frequently found among men. He is not a fountain sending forth at the

same place both sweet water and bitter. With safety and confidence may a humble soul commit itself into the arms of such a being. No one, according to this doctrine, has anything to fear from God, but the proud and rebellious, the unbelieving and impenitent. Let them, indeed, fear and tremble; for surely bad must be the doctrine that speaks peace to the wicked. But let the returning sinner who is humbled for his crimes, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh, let the penitent believer in Jesus, who is conscious of extreme unworthiness in himself, look to the character of God through the medium of that doctrine which has now been asserted, and what shall he behold? A boundless, fathomless ocean of goodness, of love, of grace and mercy! and a river of life and salvation to convey him thither, in order to enjoy everlasting felicity.

In this doctrine, kept from the impure mixture before mentioned, there is no room for the foul imputation that God effectuates evil in order that good may result from it,—that predestination exhibits Deity in a forbidding and terrific form, asserting His rights without clemency or benevolence, and dispensing His favours and His chastisements with a capricious hand. No; he who persists in connecting the doctrine of predestination, as here maintained, with such hideous representations of the Divine character, is fit to associate only with those who inhabit the extremes, either of impiety, or ignorance, or unaccountable prejudice.

3. As in the present case, the end, and the way leading to it, are inseparable, every reasoning and argument, every alarming topic, every scriptural exhortation calculated to promote holiness of heart, and every obligation to moral and religious duty, are in full force. They who represent these things as inconsistent with predestination either have a wrong view of the subject, or care not what they say nor whereof they affirm. Obligation to duty is founded on widely and totally different considerations.*

God sustains, with respect to man, a twofold character—the one is that of an equitable governor, the other that of a sovereign disposer. Answerably to this, man sustains a twofold character also—that of an accountable agent, and that of a disposable subject. As passive in the hand of a sovereign God, he is necessitated to good in proportion as goodness attaches to him; and in the heirs of salvation this is predestination to life. As active, or a moral

* See Note E in Appendix to Vol. I.

agent, man is treated according to the rules of reason and equity, yet mingled with undeserved favours; so that every man is, in these different respects, at once the subject of liberty and necessity.

Equally vague and unprofitable, therefore, is all controversy on the subject now alluded to, while one side contends for liberty, and the other for necessity, to the usual exclusion of the opposite. Neither can be wholly right: for as sure as God disposes of a man for final good, the doctrine of necessity is true; and as sure as a man is a transgressor of Divine law, and thus is fitted for destruction, he is free from all decretive necessity.

Let the children of God be upon their guard against the too fashionable but pitiful sophistry, and base delusion, which would insinuate that their embracing this doctrine tends to lull them asleep in sin, or to lessen their abhorrence of it. Listen not, without a holy mixture of indignation and pity, to the stale inference, that if you are destined to eternal glory, you may sit at your ease with folded arms, or sing a requiem on the downy bed of indifference. Attend rather to the apostolic inference, that, since an appointed future glory awaits you, you should be "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord." And again:—"Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, ... ye are all the children of light; . . . . therefore let us watch and be sober, . . . putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath; but [he hath appointed us] to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." Here, the knowledge of their state, as the children of light, and their interest in the saving appointment of Divine love, are adduced as motives, and supremely excellent motives they are, to the worthy exercise of every Christian grace and virtue. May this be their influence on your minds!

4. Here is no room for the impious inference, that when we do evil we are predestinated to it. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for as God cannot be tempted with evil, so neither tempteth he any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above,

and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." But evil, in whatever person, in whatever place, at whatever time, in whatever form or degree, is from a quarter diametrically opposite. Give the deluded Mohammedan the exclusive boast, that while he deals death and devastation all around, the bloody work was predetermined by an irreversible decree, and himself the predestinated instrument of such atrocious deeds. But you have not so learned Christ, nor have His inspired servants taught us any such doctrine. On the contrary—

5. When at any time we are engaged in the work of God, in anything whatever that is morally good, then are we employed in the execution of the Divine purposes; for there is no good done in time but was decreed to be done, in all its circumstances, from eternity. Even all the actions of the wicked, except the deformity or sinfulness which is in them, are also worthy of God to predestinate. This consideration, every one must allow, is a great incentive to virtue and holiness. The inferential remark is applicable both to ministers and people. Are ministers engaged in preaching the law for conviction, the promises for encouragement, and the unsearchable riches of Christ for consolation? are they urging, according to Scripture commands and example, repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ? do they enforce Christian duties, teaching the disciples all things whatsoever our Lord and Lawgiver has commanded? do they warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come, or invite the burdened and heavy-laden to seek rest in the meek and lowly, the merciful and loving Saviour? They are in all this only the instruments of a sovereign God, or the appointed means whereby He executes His eternal purposes. Again; has God enjoined the necessity of repentance, faith, holiness, obedience, and perseverance, poverty of spirit, holy mourning, purity of heart, love to enemies? Our personal compliance, which is evermore of grace, is only the decreed method of bringing us to that eternal glory which is the end. Once more—

6. This doctrine, properly guarded and rightly understood, shews with peculiar force the true ground of repentance, and the obligations of gratitude. If the sinfulness of no action is decreed, but proceeds wholly from that in us which is opposite to God and His will, whether secret or revealed, rectoral or decretive, what can be more binding and reasonable than repentance toward God? And

if all good, whether natural, supernatural, moral, or spiritual, in ourselves and others, in time and to eternity, proceeds from God's predestination, what a foundation is there laid for gratitude!

Thus, my brethren, have I discussed what was at first proposed, by endeavouring, in the first place, to state some cautionary observations, in order to guard this important doctrine from abuses. And here it was shewn, that its importance should be well weighed, its nature kept free from impure mixtures, and the connexion between the end and the means maintained. In the second place, the proofs of the doctrine have been advanced; wherein it was shewn, in addition to direct passages of Scripture, that as God operates for final causes, it is unworthy of Him to suppose that He effects a work so transcendently great as the salvation of the Church without purposing so to do,—that both Scripture and universal experience represent the state of mankind to be such as excludes every other cause of salvation but God's predestinating favour,—that nothing short of this could be worthy of God's great end in the work of salvation,—that it is necessary to secure the efficacy of the death of Christ, and the work of the Holy Spirit,—and that the very existence of a covenant of grace supposes it. In the next place, a number of objections have been answered; and, finally, some practical uses of the subject inculcated. The whole is now left to your devout consideration, your impartial judgment, and the blessing of God. "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering." "Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure." "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. . . . . And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." Amen.

SERMON V.

APOSTOLIC ZEAL RECOMMENDED.*

ROMANS ix. 3.

"For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."

IN the history of religion we find many instances of eminent zeal; but next to Him of whom it was said, "The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up," † we observe no one whose character appears in this respect so eminently conspicuous as the apostle of the Gentiles; and, therefore, no one is so proper at this time to be held up to our imitation. By the Jews, "his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh," he was accused as "a mover of sedition," ‡—a factious ringleader of a dangerous rising sect; but so far was this imputation from being just, that both he and the people with whom he associated were deliberately prepared to make the greatest sacrifices for the welfare even of their accusers.

This temper of mind was evidently *habitual* to St Paul. When ordered to appear before the Jewish king Agrippa, the Gentile governor Festus, and their courtly attendants, what benevolent zeal fills his breast! Before that brilliant assembly he appears, loaded with bonds; but, conscious of innocence, integrity, and the goodness of his cause, he meditates nothing less than the conversion of his judges. Never were the words of the royal proverbialist more strikingly verified, "The righteous is bold as a lion." By the simple narrative which he gave of his conversion, supported by such irresistible evidence of truth and dignity, and by a direct appeal to his royal auditor, who was no stranger to the prophetic writings,

* Preached at the eleventh general meeting of the Missionary Society.

† John ii. 17. ‡ Acts xxiv. 5.

Agrippa was not a little moved, and exclaimed in open court, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian!" St Paul's answer is expressive of his prevailing disposition:—"I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day," my most inveterate prosecutors not excepted, "were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds."

A similar spirit of holy zeal appears in the history and writings of St Paul on many occasions; but at present let me call to recollection that one instance only, which took place during his interview with the elders of the church at Ephesus. Having left Troas for Jerusalem by sea, and wishing to have an interview with his friends, without the hazard of being detained at Ephesus, he sailed beyond them to Miletus; for it is observed by the sacred historian, that "St Paul had determined to *sail by*," that is, not to call at, "Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia; for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost. And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus," about forty miles distant, "and called the elders of the church."* Highly glad they were, no doubt, to give him the meeting, that they might receive by him, as the honoured instrument, some heavenly communications, and partake of spiritual ardour from this "burning and shining light." During the interview, in the most humble, simple, and affecting manner, he reminds them of their former intercourse; and then declares to them his future prospects:—"And now, behold, I go bound in the Spirit," or, constrained by the Holy Spirit, "unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth," by past events and prophetic intimations, "in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."† Such was the truly Christian and heroic zeal of this first of missionaries commissioned to preach the gospel to the heathen.

On the words of our text, ingenuity of criticism has found much to say; but what has been said to any valuable purpose may be comprised in a small space—namely, that the words are expressive of great zeal and resolution. Some, indeed, have ingeniously supposed that the words may be read as a question, "Could I wish

* Acts xx. 16, 17. † Acts xx. 22–24; see particularly chap. xxi. 13.

myself accursed from Christ?" But instead of enumerating what others have advanced, I shall only propose, with your indulgence, what appears to my own view the real import of the apostle's declaration, and the genuine spirit which it breathes; to the following effect:—"I am charged by my countrymen with being *a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout all the world, and a ringleader of the Nazarenes.** For deserting the Jewish worship and communion, I have been under their *anathema.* They suppose that my chief aim is to place myself at the head of a growing party in opposition to them, from a principle of retaliating resentment. But against every charge or surmise of the kind, I appeal to the Searcher of all hearts, and enter before men my deliberate and most solemn protest; *I say the truth in Christ,* in union with the true Witness, and as becomes a Christian, *I lie not; my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,* while under His gracious influence, *that I have great heaviness, and continual sorrow in my heart;* especially when I contemplate the tremendous cloud that is about to burst on them for their unbelieving rejection of Jesus as the Messiah. So far am I from wishing evil to *my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,* that to advance their happiness *I could wish that myself were accursed,* or separated *from Christ;* that is, I would cheerfully undergo a separation from that very Church of Christ,† of which I am represented a selfish, partial, and bigoted defender. No; to promote the spiritual recovery and eternal welfare of my bitterest enemies, there is no ill-treatment from a party, no temporary disgrace, of which I could be the subject, that I am not willing to endure; nor are there any outward Christian privileges which I would not readily forego, in order to secure this great end. I *have* been separated from Moses, from the assembly of the synagogue. What

* Acts xxiv. 4.

† See 1 Cor. xii. 12, where Christ means His Church. Ἀνάθεμα εἶναι ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ is a phrase that conveys to my mind a sentence of excommunication from the Church of Christ, almost as decidedly as the other phrase "*anathema esto,*" that so frequently occurs in the history of the Romish Church. The difference lies in our knowing assuredly, from collateral proofs, that the latter of these phrases was thus applied; but that the Greek phrase expresses this idea can be only inferred from probable circumstances, and the nature of the apostle's argument. Thus understood, it is wonderfully expressive of his leading passion, perfectly accords with the state of the controversy between him and the Jewish nation, and bears a strong analogy to his usual mode of reasoning; which, it is presumed, is not equally applicable to any other interpretation of the words.

then? Am I actuated by the contracted spirit of a party? Is my zeal to be circumscribed, or deterred from its purpose, by such treatment? Have I made so little proficiency in the school of my Divine Master? Through grace, I can bear not only the contradiction of *sinners*, but even the heaviest censure of those very *friends*, for my attachment to whom I have been so much calumniated, if thereby the true happiness of my nation would be promoted." It is worthy of remark, that the solemn and deliberate manner in which the apostle introduces the declaration before us, makes it highly improbable that this mode of expression proceeded from rhetorical exaggeration, or a sally of pious passion unsupported by a cooler test. Never, I am persuaded, were his words more expressive of truth and soberness, while, at the same time, they convey the force of his heaven-born zeal.

Allow me now to offer a few considerations, which appear to me well calculated to recommend this truly Christian and highly useful temper of mind,—a qualification much to be desired at all times, but more especially in the glorious cause which is the common centre of our numerous association. Topics of argument subservient to this design are extremely numerous; but my desire is not to exhibit a long list of what might be said, so much as to call your attention to a few particulars, which, if duly weighed, will not be adduced in vain. They are easily reducible to these three divisions: the *excellent nature, the relative character*, and the *happy effects* of that zeal which I am recommending.

I. The *excellent nature* of this blessed temper, so eminently exemplified in my text, is the first consideration by which it is recommended.

Enough has been already said, in the introductory hints, to convince the unprejudiced that this, like every other good and perfect gift, "cometh from above." God, who produceth all good, and only good, must be acknowledged as its author. Its nature, as well as its origin, is Divine. To the mighty power, the sovereign pleasure, and the irresistible energy of God, every portion and degree of it ought to be ascribed. What is said of the new man in general is equally applicable to this eminent part of it; it is born, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." If, therefore, we would partake of it, to Him let our eyes and hearts be directed.

Be it remembered, moreover, that I am little anxious about various definitions of zeal, provided I am enabled to give you, as I proceed, its genuine character. If we include in it no more than "a passionate ardour for any person or cause,"* it will be found to belong alike to the furious reformer,—to the punctilious Pharisee, labouring to establish his own righteousness in opposition to the righteousness of God,—to the blind who lead the blind,—and to every degree of persecuting violence, until you descend to the gloomy horrors of a court of inquisition. Whereas Christian zeal includes a principle of universal benevolence, and an ardent desire to communicate the blessings of Divine truth as revealed to us in the gospel, governed and directed by the Holy Spirit of God. Like its intimate companion, wisdom, "it is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."† But, to be more particular—

1. The truly Christian and apostolic zeal is meek and inoffensive. How opposite to this was that temper by which St Paul was once actuated, when he made havoc of the Church, breathing out threatenings and slaughter! While a stranger to Jesus and His victorious grace, he was the willing and active organ of a large body of men in opposing the compassionate Saviour, and in persecuting His innocent followers; but no sooner is he made acquainted with Jesus, and a partaker of His temper, than the quality of his zeal is totally altered. He is no longer overcome of evil, but overcomes evil with good. It is not enough, my brethren, to change a name: Christians, so called, as well as Jews and heathens, have been "persecutors and injurious." If men professing Christianity had at all times been properly influenced by Christian zeal, we should never have heard of confiscations and prisons, of faggots and torches, of swords and gibbets, and other instruments of cruelty employed by them against any, much less against their fellow-Christians. The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace, meekness, and innocence.

2. The zeal I am recommending is kind and beneficent. In a world of provocations, of ingratitude, and of insults, it is no small praise to resemble the dove, the lamb, and the harmless infant. For, assuredly, religion does not eradicate sensibility. When the apostles of Jesus and the primitive disciples were made a laughing-

* The only definition of zeal given by Dr Johnson. † James iii. 17.

stock, and accounted the offscouring of all things, can we suppose that they had not the feelings of humanity? They had the finest feelings. They knew how to weep with them that wept, and to rejoice with them that rejoiced. When, therefore, instead of rendering evil for evil, they studiously returned all the good in their power,—blessing for cursing, meekness for insult, and kindness for cruelty,—are we not constrained to say, This is not the manner of men; this is the finger of God. "Even unto this present hour," said they, "we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place; and labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat." * Where can moral excellence and the beauty of holiness reside among mortals, if not in characters where these qualities predominate?

3. The zeal which is now recommended is noble and disinterested. Few men can be so oppressed by apathy as not to have zeal in some cause or other. The man of business, the merchant, the mechanic, the artist, the philosopher, the man of honour, and the hunter after pleasure,—all have zeal. Actuated by temporal interest, what sacrifices will not men make in order to acquire their favourite objects? Some bend all their powers to the acquisition of languages; some exert them in making new discoveries in the spacious field of science; some in improving the elegant or the useful arts; others in accumulating wealth. What years of hardship have some zealously undergone, in order to discover the source from whence a river flows, and to obtain the honour derived from that discovery! What zeal has been employed in exploring remote regions, and in ascertaining the character, the customs, and the manners of their inhabitants! What hazardous voyages have been undertaken in quest of gold, and what human victims have been multiplied with a view to secure it! In a word, what shall we say of the great statesmen and warriors, from the days of Nimrod to the present time; had they not zeal? Oh, doubtless, very great and persevering zeal. But, alas! how commonly selfish, how seldom otherwise than selfish, and how often cruel!

Not so the zeal of St Paul. If men are made happy, his unrelenting enemies not excepted, if their immortal souls are saved from sin and misery, he can cheerfully suffer the loss of all things:

* 1 Cor. iv. 11–13.

he surrenders himself to be bound,—he gives his back to the scourge,—he enters the dungeon,—he encounters hunger, and thirst, and nakedness. Hear his own words:—"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. . . . So then death worketh in us, but life in you. . . . For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God."*

4. Truly Christian and apostolic zeal is diffusive and universal. To some, the restricted language of my text may appear to render this remark less appropriate, since the fervour of affection expressed in it is towards his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh. But let it be remembered, that he was the apostle of the Gentiles professedly. Of his fervent regard for them, there could be no doubt; all his actions loudly proclaimed it. He was, as before observed, suspected of ill-will and laborious opposition to the Jews on that very account. Men generally judge of others by the aid of their own consciousness. They hated and opposed him, and thence inferred, with more precipitancy than truth, that he also was their determined foe. What resource, therefore, is left him as an innocent and benevolent man? None, but a solemn declaration, as in the words before us. May it not be asserted, then, that, in the circumstances in which this wonderful man was placed, there could not be a more striking evidence of the universality of his zeal. His brethren were further from the truth, and more virulent antagonists than any heathens with whom he had to do. No opposition was more implacable than what was fostered in the synagogue. Here is the true missionary zeal; the objects of it are those who are the most refractory and the furthest from Christ, not less than the more teachable. If it exert itself among one description of mankind more than another, it is not owing to the contracted nature of the principle, but rather to the openings of providential occurrences, and the intimations of ministerial acceptance.

5. Apostolic zeal is rational and steady. From the general nature of zeal, it is manifest, that where it does not exist as the ruling passion, it does not exist at all. But how often is this

* 2 Cor. iv. 8, &c.

ruling passion irrational, founded on pride, or the love of power and wealth, directed by caprice, and wavering as the wind! If at any time it acquires the stability of patriotic firmness in opposition to indolence, to faction, or to unconstitutional measures, how is the patriot admired and extolled as rising far above the common level of humanity? And it must be acknowledged, that when an individual so far denies himself as to spring forth from the circle of selfishness to embrace the welfare of millions, we cannot withhold from him the claims of superiority. Thus, for instance, the Roman orator may be admired when, in one of his orations, he declares, "For my own part, could I enjoy the consulate only upon the terms of my being subjected to cruelty, pain, and anguish of every kind, I would bear them, not with courage only, but with pleasure, provided that from these my sufferings you and the people of Rome were to derive dignity and security."* The sentiment itself, so far as it goes, is truly noble, but being supported only by human strength, it did not endure the hour of trial; for this very man, who confounded the boldest conspirators, and made even powerful tyrants tremble in his presence, when oppressed and banished by the Clodian faction, appears, by his letters, "not rejoicing in tribulation," but giving vent to lamentation and grief bordering on despair.

The value of patriotic zeal, however, is chiefly owing to two considerations—namely, the comparative number of persons to be benefited, and the immediate temporal welfare of a state; but Christian zeal embraces all men, under every form of government; and as to the duration of the meditated good, numbers fail in the attempt to calculate the comparison. Thus it reasons:—"For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."†

A man under the strong influence of such principles might well

* "Mihi quidem si hæc conditio consulatus data est, ut omnes acerbitates, omnes dolores, cruciatusque preferrem; feram non solum fortiter, sed etiam libenter, dummodo meis laboribus, vobis, populoque R. dignitas, salusque pariatur."—*Cic. in Cat.*, Orat. iv.

† 2 Cor. iv. 16–18.

say to his beloved weeping companions, "What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."* "I suffer trouble as an evil-doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound. Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."† When speaking merely of political characters, it scarcely is going too far to say, "Every man has his price." But what would have been the price of integrity, and a regard to eternal realities, presented to the apostles of Christ? An answer is already made and recorded; and had all the riches of the earth, concentrated, been included in the offer, the language would have been the same:—"Thy money perish with thee: . . . . thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness."‡ These, brethren, are the excellent of the earth; these are they who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, who are faithful till death, and even in death itself are more than conquerors. He who can view no excellence in such a spirit —a spirit meek and inoffensive, kind and beneficent, noble and disinterested, diffusive and universal, rational and steady—deserves to be pitied for his blindness, and blamed for a perverseness of mind but too well modified to oppose the greatest good, and to perpetrate the greatest evil.

II. The *relative character* of Christian and apostolic zeal forms the second division of my subject, and is the next argument by which it is now recommended. If it bear a strong resemblance to the Divine benevolence,—if it be an exemplification of the prevailing temper of Jesus the Mediator,—if it be the genuine effect of gospel truth,—and, finally, if it be the native effort and expression of a heavenly principle in the soul, our former argument from its nature and properties will be strengthened.

1. It bears a strong and striking resemblance to the Divine benevolence. Blind must be the soul that sees no beauty in this attribute of God, and callous must be the feeling which is unmoved by the contemplation of it. It embraces universal being; and excludes no tribe, no individual, of men. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."§ Nay, more,

* Acts xxi. 13. † 2 Tim. ii. 9, 10. ‡ Acts viii. 20–22. § John iii. 16.

"God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* But does He propose Himself to us as an object of imitation? Undoubtedly He does. Hear His own testimony, as delivered by His incarnate Son:—"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them who despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them who love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect."† From these and other numerous passages of Holy Writ, it is manifest that the benevolence of God, and the holy zeal of which we speak, bear a near resemblance. Is Divine benevolence an active principle, the effect of wise purpose, ardent in pursuit of its object, and employing all suitable means to accomplish its end? So is Christian zeal. Does the former surmount all difficulties? is it restrained by no unworthiness? is it full of compassion, meekness, and tenderness. The same is equally true of the latter. If we advert to God's conduct towards His Church through every period of its existence, (a conduct, alas! too often requited with ingratitude,) and even His dealings with His openly rebellious enemies, we may justly infer, that what we admire most in human character, when "zealously affected in a good cause," is but a faint resemblance of the blessed God. As, therefore, we would consistently admire what is so truly admirable, and imitate the most amiable Divine perfection, let us prize and cultivate this Christian grace.

2. Apostolic zeal is an exemplification of the prevailing temper of Christ. He went about doing good, reproving the proud and selfish, encouraging the humble and devout, instructing the ignorant, cherishing the teachable, proclaiming glad tidings to the meek, and warning the careless to flee from the wrath to come. His conduct towards the worldly and profane, who trampled under foot the decencies as well as the institutions of religion, declares at once the strength and the nature of his heroic zeal:—"And

* Rom. v. 8. † Matt. v. 43-48. ‡ Rom. viii. 32.

Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: and when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; and said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence: make not my Father's house an house of merchandise. Then his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up." * Notwithstanding His very peculiar ardour upon this occasion, there is not the least intimation of any personal injury or insult offered, inconsistent with the purest benevolence. This heavenly temper never forsook Him. In all His labours and hardships, amidst the insulting attacks of men and devils, and under the most cruel treatment in the awful scene of His crucifixion, He did not revile, He did not threaten, but ardently pressed forward in well-doing, and with His last breath exclaimed, "Father, forgive them;" graciously pleading in their excuse, "for they know not what they do."

This, my brethren, though a wonderful exemplification of benevolent zeal, is neither the beginning nor the end of it:—"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." † And this was in pursuance of covenant engagements:—"Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened, [or, a body hast thou prepared me:] burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." ‡ Nor is He now less ardently engaged in prosecuting His glorious mediatorial work; for whatever of this holy ardour is felt by mortals comes from Christ. He is the author as well as the grand exemplar of it. He is gone to a far country, (far, if we consult our senses only,) and has left us here, not merely to *serve*, but also to *represent* Him. He is the invisible and primary, we the visible and secondary agents. He continues to subdue enemies by spiritual weapons, to call sinners by His grace, to seek wandering sheep who are not of His fold, to feed the flock, and to comfort the feeble-minded, to gather the lambs with His arms, and to carry them in His bosom. But how does He proceed? By the

* John ii. 13–17. † 2 Cor. viii. 9. ‡ Ps. xl. 6–8; Heb. x. 5.

use of suitable instruments. And who, think you, are more suitable than those who have the spirit and mind of Christ? Who but those who feel the love of Christ constraining them; who know likewise the terrors of the Lord; who believe, and therefore speak; who leave all to follow Him through good report and evil report; who seek not the honour which cometh from men, but that which cometh from God only? Their eye of faith is open, and surveys eternal things; beholds the fashion of this world passing away, the world itself in flames, and the elements melting with fervent heat; and Jesus, at no very distant period, "coming with clouds," to settle for ever His mediatorial kingdom and transactions. "The zeal of the Lord of hosts"—Jehovah-Jesus—"shall perform this."

But the end is not yet. Other sheep there are, not yet of this fold, which the great Shepherd shall bring in: the poor African, the Indian, the Islander,—those who have not yet heard of Him shall become subject unto Him, and some out of "every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation," * "till the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ." † And in order to effect this great work, "the Master hath need" of instruments, especially of men whose spirits He forms in unison with His own. The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few. Let us pray the Lord of the harvest that He will qualify and send forth more labourers.

3. This holy zeal is the genuine effect of gospel truth. Who is not an avowed advocate for truth? For though some, Judas-like, betray the gospel verity even while they profess to hail and salute it; yet they still confess that truth is preferable to error, however they may blunder in their choice. Be that as it may, we cannot, brethren, look upon evangelical truth as a subject of indifference, nor plead for the innocence of mental error. Pure truth, as it is in Jesus, has in it an invaluable worth, and to the spiritual mind an ineffable charm. Such are its nature, its origin, and its tendency, that where the impression of it is most powerful, there holy zeal is the corresponding effect. Not that the word ever becomes effectual without the Holy Spirit; but where the mind is, if I may so speak, seasoned by this blessed agent, in that degree the genuine fruit of it is benevolent and ardent exertion. On inquiry, I believe it will be found universally true that eminent zeal and eminent

* Rev. v. 9, xiv. 6. † Rev. xi. 15.

usefulness, are the produce of a strong apprehension and a deep sense of Divine truth, inducing the soul first ardently to love it, and then to extend the healing benefit to all around. Was not this the case with the apostles and primitive evangelists? Though one differ from another in glory, yet each is a bright star, and glows to the praise of Jehovah. Who have been the most useful in later ages? Do we ever find a Pantænus, an Elliot, a Brainerd, unactuated by evangelical principles? As well may we expect warmth from the lunar light, or grapes from thorns, and figs from thistles, as this blessedness from any other quarter than the hearing of faith and the Spirit of Christ. As, therefore, we value the genuine and full effects of truth on our own minds and those of others, our souls will hunger and thirst after this humble zeal, and the genuine operations of it.

4. It is a native effort and expression of a heavenly principle in the soul. The life of God in the renewed mind corresponds in its properties with the Divine nature, of which it is an emanation. Though the *mode* of existence in God be a profound mystery, the *operations* of His nature are more within our apprehensions; these we know in part from abundant manifestations in the sacred oracles, and Jesus is the image of the invisible God, not only in His person, but also in His operations. In whatever soul the living water is found, it works its way powerfully through all obstructions. It stays not in all its course; and every subject of it would fain bear all, to whom he has access, along with him into the paradisiacal ocean of bliss. Yes, my brethren, if the corruptions that are in the world through lust be warded off,—if the body of sin be effectually kept under,—if the works of the flesh have no place in us,—if pride, envy, hatred, covetousness, and all evil passions be subdued and mortified, we shall have no want of holy zeal; because then the life of grace will not be imprisoned, but will march forth in its native strength and glory. From the whole of this argument it is plain, that Christian, ardent zeal is recommended with growing force, whether we consider the character of Divine benevolence, the prevailing temper of Christ, the genuine effect of gospel truth, or the native expression of a heavenly principle in the soul.

III. The third division of this subject, which is the last general

argument to recommend apostolic zeal, regards the *happy effects* that may be expected from its exercise.

And, in the first instance, what can be more beneficial to the individual himself who is the subject of it? We have already observed its intrinsic excellence in several particulars, which I need not repeat, and which are eminently perfective of our nature. We have seen also its engaging characters, as related to God in His active benevolence, to Christ in His mediatorial proceedings, to revealed truth in its impressive energy, and to a gracious principle in its genuine operations. What I now further assert is, that it is highly conducive to personal happiness. Who can glory in tribulations, exult in a prison, be content in every state, and rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, but the zealous Christian? The more we experience of this ardent zeal, the closer will be our communion with God, the more intimate our union with Jesus, the sweeter our fellowship with His disciples; in short, the nearer will be our approach to the spirits of just men made perfect, and the flaming seraphs that surround the upper throne. On the contrary, when you have grown cold or lukewarm, or when your generous ardour has been checked by less noble objects and pursuits, have you not found yourselves like persons breathing impure air, or living on unwholesome food? Yes, whether you could account for the specific cause or not, you have felt the evil. As holiness is the spiritual health of the soul, so Christian zeal constitutes its warmth.

Reflect, in the next instance, that were this the happy experience of God's people, individually considered, what a blessing it would be to families. Then, not only would the hours of worship be more truly edifying, but every intercourse and transaction would partake of the advantage. Then, Christian principles would be not only planted with care, but also watered with affection. Parents and children, masters and servants, and all the domestic circle, would be mutually edified. Every Christian family would be then a little church. You cannot but have noticed a difference between the families of those who have introduced religious instruction in addition to religious worship; who inculcate the importance of pure principles, the value of evangelic rules, the advantage of prudential maxims, and the necessity of personal religion in all its parts; and, on the other hand, of those who, through a criminal

indifference, either entirely omit them, or else discharge them as an irksome task, merely to save appearances. What has been the result of your observation? Have you not been constrained to infer, that the one was more lovely than the other in proportion to the prudent zeal which prevailed? It is granted, that sometimes false and untoward characters, possessing only a form of godliness without the power, may be found in the most zealous and affectionate circle. There was a Judas among the apostles. Yet in such a case, the persevering zeal of others in attempting to reclaim them is a gratifying sight. Who is not pleased and edified in reviewing the conduct of our missionaries at Otaheite, while endeavouring to restore to proper sentiments and conduct some unworthy members of their family? I must confess, that, though the occasion was painful, to my own mind the account itself has been peculiarly edifying.* May the God of truth and love, the adorable source of purity and order, always preserve that beloved family in the same evangelical spirit; and, if ever circumstances should unhappily require it, may they be found acting a part equally tender and faithful!

Again; were this principle of apostolic zeal to reign in our pulpits, and the churches of the saints of all denominations, what a revival might we not reasonably expect! Were ministers and people thus qualified, would it not be justifiable, on Scripture grounds, to look for more abundant spiritual fruit? "Follow me," says the Saviour, "and I will make you fishers of men." † Thus did Peter, and thus did Paul: they entered into His views, they drank abundantly of His spirit, and zealously communicated what they felt. And what was the fruit? Multitudes were added unto the Lord, and innumerable churches formed among the Gentiles:—"They spake the word of God with boldness, and they who believed were of one heart, and one soul. With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all." ‡ It is observed, that when the people "saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, [not ignorant of religion, though comparatively illiterate,] they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." § Is it not a fact established by extensive observation, that earnest-

* See the account in the Missionary Journals, vol. i.

† Matt. iv. 19. ‡ Acts iv. 31–33. § Ver. 13.

ness of desire to be useful is the usual forerunner of success? Where do we find numerous conversions under a languid ministry? Has not our Lord himself decided this point, that lukewarm churches are highly displeasing to Him? "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, ... I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. . . . . So then because thou art lukewarm, ... I will spue thee out of my mouth. . . . . Be zealous therefore and repent."* Such a blessed revival in our churches would afford us room to expect more promising candidates for the sacred ministry at home, and others offering themselves and their services among the heathen. Then sons would be more willing to leave their parents and friends; and parents happy to resign their sons to God, to engage in a work so truly honourable. Then the opulent would unite their prayers and their property, and the poor would abound in humble supplications to heaven. Were the spirit of humble and holy zeal more generally prevalent in Christian churches, the word of the kingdom would be "as fire in their bones;" the souls of men would appear precious, the riches of Christ unsearchable, and no expense or labour would be spared in proclaiming the glorious tidings of salvation through grace. This would qualify stated ministers, missionaries, exhorters, and all Christian teachers to strike the flinty heart with the authority of truth, or to melt its obstinacy with the purest love; while, without it, all human arts and accomplishments labour but in vain, and spend their ineffectual strength for nought. For the purpose of spiritual harmony, their united efforts are no better than sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. For, "not by might nor by power," and, I may add, not by philosophic research, not by niceties of speculation, not by artificial contrivances, "but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Filled, my brethren, with that Spirit, "the Spirit of power and of love, and of a sound mind," we may view the highest mountains of difficulty without dismay. Difficulties, indeed, there are in building the spiritual temple; but if God be with us, who shall be against us? "Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel," though a stranger among the heathen, "thou shalt become a plain; and he shall bring forth the head-stone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it."†

What happy effects may be expected to follow the cultivation of such a spirit in our *own country* as well as in foreign parts,

* Rev. iii. 14. † Zech. iv. 6, 7.

appears in some degree from what has already taken place. While no inconsiderable number of missionaries have been sent forth, and are employed abroad, since the commencement of this institution, does not our country at large, in a religious view, participate a reciprocation of benefits? It certainly has given rise to the exercise of uncommon liberality, a liberality flowing from the purest fountain; which fountain, we trust, will never be drained. Besides; many Christian societies and churches, which, prior to the monthly prayer-meetings for the success of the gospel, had been unsociable towards each other, have harmoniously blended their devotions. Religious intelligence has been more widely diffused, and the meaner strains of conversation have often been excluded by profitably adverting to the methods of Providence in the spread of gospel truth. As for bigotry, at a very early period of this institution, a grave was dug for it: let us now, my dear brethren, unite our efforts to lay down odious lukewarmness by the side of that monster, in the same grave; and there may they lie together, never to rise any more, while Christian benevolence and zeal rule and bless our world, till time shall be lost in eternity.

As to *success abroad*, though sanguine expectations have been disappointed, as they generally are, yet some truly encouraging accounts have reached us; encouragements, in my view, which constitute an abundant compensation for all the toil and expense which the society and the public have encountered. Nor should we doubt that a smiling Providence exists behind the darkest cloud. Some of the heathen, where least expected, have been converted to God; and many who hear me have been eye-witnesses of a glorious specimen of the Saviour's triumphs.* The cause at present is but as a "handful of corn in the earth, upon the top of the mountains," but the language of prophecy leads us to look for a crop from it that shall "shake like Lebanon." Remember the fermenting power of a little leaven; remember the smallness of a grain of mustard-seed. Whenever the work already effected appears in our eyes as nothing, in comparison of what we hoped for, we should stand reproved by this question, "Who hath despised the day of small things?" "Be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord; and be strong, O Joshua; and be

* Alluding to the three converted Hottentots, who visited the metropolis with Mr Kicherer.

strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work: for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts."* Let heaven-born zeal go forth, and no power of darkness can stand before it.

But after all that has been said, an objection may still remain on the minds of some:—"All *cannot* be zealous, for how many are there who are constitutionally dull and phlegmatic! Besides; what would become of business, and those engagements that would ruin us, if not pursued with all the spirit we have?" Now, my brethren, if you take zeal in the sense before explained, I will not allow that there is *any* constitution whatever which may not be the subject of it. Some, indeed, may have more lively *expressions* of it than others; but a constitutional peculiarity is no more a ground of exemption from Christian zeal than it is of exemption from a new birth unto righteousness. Shew me an *eminent* Christian, and I will shew you in the same person a *zealous* one; be his constitution, his animal spirits, his power of speech, or his occupations in life what they may. Apostolic zeal is not inconsistent with the most consummate prudence.

Since you ask, How are we first to obtain, and then to employ our zeal? I would reply, Feel your want, and in connexion with this feeling, look to the Divine source of compassion and grace. Begin, then, with what is most within your reach, and one step will introduce another. There is no flaming sword between you and the throne of grace. Even now, let inward prayer, that is, earnest, sincere desire, have room in your breast. Let grateful thanksgivings for past favours, and holy resolutions how to employ your talents in future, prove your sincerity. Are any of you in opulent circumstances? Reflect that you are stewards accountable to God. Therefore take due care of what may be called your golden weights; for, be assured, if the pinions of your faith and love be not proportionably strengthened, your souls will be dangerously hindered in their efforts to rise towards heaven. There are many in the professing world who withhold more than is meet. You have now a good opportunity to shew your wisdom.

To conclude; are you private Christians? Seek the precious gift, which is the subject of this discourse, in retirement; and exercise it in your families, in the churches or societies to which you belong, and in all your connexions in life. Are we ministers

* Zech. iv. 10; Hag. ii. 4.

of Christ, intrusted officially with His unsearchable riches? Let us be faithful to our trust, and cherish the sacred flame, not merely as other Christians, but also among our people. And even should age, infirmities, or any other cause blunt the edge of our own zeal, be it at least our ambition to sharpen the activity of others. Are any of you desirous of missionary labours? Allow me to ask, how do you feel disposed towards your ignorant and wicked neighbours? If you are wise to win souls at home, both by word and behaviour, and feel a benevolent glow which you earnestly wish to impart to others, together with the truth as it is in Jesus; if you are conscious that sinister ends are kept, prevailingly, out of sight, and that you habitually aim at the glory of God, and the salvation of perishing souls; if you are not only sufficiently gifted, but also spiritually-minded,—not only courageous enough to venture abroad among the refuse of mankind, but likewise very humble, meek, and affectionate,—I congratulate you as highly favoured of the Lord! Go forth and prosper, for the Lord will be with you. The God of Joseph will lift up your head. Remember who hath said, "Even the hairs of your head are all numbered;" and again, "Lo, I am with you alway." The Angel of the covenant will not forsake you, while humbly dependent upon Him; but will be ever present to moderate, yea, to render harmless, the flames of fiery trials. And when your work of faith and labour of love shall be finished, whether at home or abroad, you shall join "the glorious company of the apostles, the goodly fellowship of the prophets, and the noble army of martyrs," sounding in heavenly strains the song of Moses and the Lamb, in that world which has no end.

SERMON VI.

ON CHRISTIAN UNANIMITY.*

PHILIPPIANS i. 27, 28.

"That ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; and in nothing terrified by your adversaries."

THAT the gospel of Christ is truly and superlatively excellent in its nature, its origin, its effects, and everlasting consequences, none who have tasted of its grace, and felt its power, can hesitate to assert. Convinced of this important sentiment, the apostles and other disciples of Jesus watched, with benevolent solicitude, every opportunity to diffuse the sweet savour of grace among all nations, as Providence presented to them a suitable introduction. Sometimes, indeed, a miraculous interposition directed the course of their evangelic labours. This was the case when St Paul was admonished in a vision to go to Macedonia. There he preached with abundant success, and especially at Philippi. At this place, after much persecution, he succeeded in establishing a considerable Christian church, towards which he discovers a strong affection. Those persons with whom, and even those places where, we have experienced singular trials and deliverances, naturally excite in us, at the moments of recollection, the tenderest emotions. This principle of our nature, rendered still more affectionate and noble by Divine influence, will account for the reciprocal and peculiar endearment manifested between the apostle and the Philippians. In the strongest modes of sanctified friendship he reveals his own heart to them; and in their affectionate regard for him he seems to repose deserved confidence.

* Preached before the Annual Meeting of the General Congregational Union, May 1808.

When St Paul penned this epistle, he appears to have been, exclusive of his extraordinary inspiration, in a most desirable frame of mind. His one constant desire was, that Christ "might be magnified, whether by life or by death." To "depart, that he might be with Christ," he knew was far better than continuance in the body; "nevertheless, to abide in the flesh" was more needful for the churches. Oh that this may be the blessed and habitual frame of our minds! The apostle—regarding his beloved friends at Philippi as enjoying "fellowship in the gospel," having "a good work begun in them," and being "partakers of the same grace with him"—lays a marked emphasis on a corresponding deportment:—"*Only* let your *conversation* be as becometh the gospel of Christ;" as if he had said, The sum of my best wishes for you is this, Behave, through the whole of your conduct, as worthy denizens of the city of God. But whether he should be further indulged with a personal interview, (of which he expresses a confident expectation,* and which probably was the case,) or be absent from them, and hearing of their affairs by report, his earnest desire was, "that they would stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; and in nothing terrified by their adversaries."

In this apostolic exhortation, the prominent points recommended are, Christian *unanimity, exertion,* and *courage* in behalf of the glorious gospel of Christ. If this gospel be, as indeed it is, a message from heaven to the inhabitants of our earth, containing "glad tidings of great joy sent unto all people;" and if by it is revealed pardon for the guilty, and life to the dead, rest for the weary, and joy for the sorrowful; it must be "worthy of all acceptation,"—worthy of being boldly professed, strenuously defended against opposers, and zealously propagated among sinners who "perish for lack of knowledge." Surely, if in any cause affectionate unanimity, strenuous exertion, and undaunted courage, should be nourished and employed, it must be in favour of Christianity, and the distinguishing excellences of the gospel. If these virtues be accounted worthy of praise in the defence of a country, a city, a fortress, or a fleet when property or our natural existence is endangered, how much more commendable must they be when our spiritual welfare and immortal life are the objects in view?

When the disciples of Jesus Christ manifest their saving relation

* See ver. 25.

to Him, and exemplify their principles by a becoming conversation; when they "stand fast in one spirit, striving together for the faith of the gospel;" how delightful the scene! The very thought of it cheered the spirit of our apostle. Indeed, such conduct as the text recommends, we may rest assured, has the approbation of Him from whom proceedeth every good and perfect gift, and of Him who is the great Head of the Church; for it has a direct tendency to subserve the Divine glory, exhibits a compliance with an express injunction of Heaven, and may be regarded as the fruit of eternal counsel, favour, and gracious influence.

It is gratifying to reflect in how many different ways the spirit of our text has been already exemplified by the disciples of Christ in this highly-favoured country. When we behold thousands assembling yearly from all parts of the kingdom, in order to encourage evangelical missions; when we behold persons who love the Saviour and the immortal souls He purchased with His precious blood, though differing in the circumstantials of religion, taking sweet counsel together for devising the most effectual means of evangelising the heathen; is it not an emblem of "the church of the first-born?" It is highly pleasing also to observe the unanimous exertions made in order to spread religious knowledge among the ignorant in our own country. Laudable means are employed to reprove sin, to awaken conviction, to promote reformation of manners, and to proclaim salvation, in many parts of our land, which have been too long and most lamentably neglected. By the aid of Sunday schools, and by the distribution of religious tracts, much advantage has been gained against the prince of darkness. And we hope that still greater advantage will ultimately accrue from "The British and Foreign Bible Society." For by this, provision is made not only for multiplying copies of the Holy Scriptures at home, but also for translating them into the vernacular languages of many nations; a design which, as it deserves, will eventually obtain the gratitude and applause of mankind. May prosperity attend their endeavours, until the knowledge of the Lord fill the world! Opposers there are, and probably will be, to the propagation of sacred truth, however innocent may be the mode of effecting it; but "who is he that shall harm us, if we be followers of that which is good?" Let those, therefore, who embark in so benevolent a cause be "in nothing terrified by their adversaries."

Should any urge, that here we should stop,—that by a multiplicity of objects we are in danger of exhausting our zeal,—I presume to say, that the objector has not sufficiently considered the nature of the subject. By the presentation of new objects, true zeal is befriended. The hallowed flame, by the addition of proper fuel, is not extinguished but increased. I venture, then, to propose a new object in which our united zeal, exertion, and courage, may be profitably occupied; an object often mentioned, and long wished for by numbers; but at the same time, it cannot be concealed, of so great difficulty in its practical accomplishment, that many despair of seeing it advantageously realised. I refer to "a General Union of Congregational Churches," for purposes the most beneficial to the denomination itself, and the general cause of the Redeemer's kingdom. Having been requested by the committee formed for carrying this arduous project into execution, to deliver my thoughts on the subject at this time, I solicit your attention, while feeling conscious that I need all the candour you can afford.

In attempting to fulfil my present design, I propose, first, to consider the general grounds of Christian unanimity; secondly, to state the peculiar nature of the Congregational Union intended; thirdly, the principal objects of it; fourthly, the best mode of effecting it; and, fifthly, some of its peculiar advantages. May the God of love and of order smile upon this attempt, and the infant cause to which it refers!

I. Let us consider the general grounds of Christian unanimity.

Differences of some kind, and to a certain extent, are unavoidable among all God's creatures. There neither are nor can be any two beings in the universe perfectly alike; a thought which may well serve to moderate our expectations. Nor, for the same reason, does grace utterly exclude a diversity of thought, any more than a number of well-tuned instruments excludes a diversity of sound; it is enough, in order to constitute a pleasing union, that the different tones have a harmonious concord.

1. The first ground of Christian unanimity is the union of souls with God in virtue of a spiritual principle. Vital *religion* is a reunion, or, as the word imports, a rebinding of the soul to God. He is one in essence, one in being, one in design; He is of one mind from eternity to eternity. Among all the diversities of worlds and of individual existences, everything tends to one ultimate point.

"For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever."* Sinful creatures propose to themselves *other* ends besides what God proposes to Himself and to us,—ends totally different. Hence God's disapprobation of the sinner's thoughts, designs, tempers, and ways; and hence the contest between Him and the rebellious offender. God proposes, according to infinite rectitude, the good of the whole, and unreserved concurrence with Him and His glorious designs; but the sinner puts a negative to this, and practically asserts that he will not comply. And here the controversy takes place between God, the Supreme Ruler, and the daring transgressor. But who hath hardened himself against infinite rectitude, unsullied holiness, and matchless power, with success? "If I whet my glittering sword," says Jehovah, "and my hand take hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me."† But sovereign grace and the force of Divine truth subdue the rebels, bring down every proud thought, and they are made willing subjects in the day of their King's power. Then they become partakers of a Divine nature, having escaped the corruptions that are in the world. The conquered sinner's language then is, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? Whom have I in heaven but Thee? May I never more follow my own will in opposition to Thine; but let everything I am, and have, and perform, be henceforth directed to Thy glory." His whole soul, all his powers and passions, and all his operations, are now prepared to concur in the grand chorus, "For thee all things are and were created; glory to God and the Lamb for ever."

2. The second ground of Christian unanimity is the union of souls to the Mediator by the exercise of a living faith. Christ is the great centre of union to His believing people. What the sun is to the system of our material world, that and much more is Christ to His Church. He is one,—"the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,"—the common centre of spiritual attraction, of cheering light, and fructifying warmth. In His person perfect rectitude is made visible. Here faith beholds how the Divine purpose and the holy laws of heaven were fulfilled by one in our nature, who was also our pattern, as well as our atonement and righteousness. Now faith in Christ includes our approval of Him, not only for the sake of effects resulting from His mediation, but also for His *own* sake

* Rom. xi. 36. † Deut. xxxii. 41.

in the perfection of His nature, having the law of God in His heart, and as doing His holy will. He who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification, is the "Lamb in the midst of the throne," to whom every eye of faith is directed, and every gracious heart is powerfully drawn. Here the whole Church is united, however different the several parts of it may be in their modes of worship. Christ is the head of influence, and believers are His living members.

3. The third ground of Christian unanimity is the union of believing souls to revealed truth, as the declaration and faithful index of the Divine Governor's mind respecting them. Among all the varieties of subjects, of writers, of times, and of occasions, there is a unity of design through all the sacred records. Everything still tends to the same point—the glory of Jehovah. As all the principles and laws of nature, the properties of matter, and all its motions, are appointed to produce a result honourable to the Author of their existence, analogous to this are the properties and the parts of the Sacred Volume. Mysteries, indeed, there are in some parts of it; but here, also, the analogy is preserved. The Christian's mind, united to God by a spiritual nature, and to the Redeemer by a living faith, adheres also to the truth of God in His Word. It rests on His testimony, and bows to His authority. Here, therefore, all real Christians are united; from this holy spring they all draw; to this they deservedly ascribe the very existence of their exercised graces, the body of their new man, the verdure, the blossom, and the fruit of their Christianity.

4. A fourth ground of Christian unanimity is the union of souls to all that is really valuable in each other. True discrimination regards all the real disciples of Jesus in a peculiar light—as they are possessed of something good, something bad, and something indifferent. With what is good the Christian mind unites, because it is good, or for its own sake; it is the reflected likeness of God and the Saviour. To what is indifferent in his brethren he attaches himself in the way of devout wish. The language of his heart is, "Oh that the gifts and various talents of my brethren, their natural capacities, their acquisitions, their situations in life, their property and influence, were all employed to glorify God,—were all made to flow in the channel divinely prescribed!" And as to their evil, his holy wish and constant prayer is, "Oh that it were diminished, removed, and prevented,—that the wrath of man may

be overruled for good, and thus made to praise my God!" Having thus endeavoured to shew that the grounds of Christian unanimity are union of soul with God by a spiritual principle, union with the Mediator by a living faith, union with revealed truth, and union with one another, let us now proceed—

II. To consider the peculiar nature of the proposed Congregational Union.

A union of this kind promising solid advantages, it should be more explicitly understood, disclaims all interference with, or control over congregational discipline. No sacrifices of privileges, or even of property, for undefined purposes, is expected. Nor are any present promises requested with a view to future performance, whereby conscience, even where most scrupulous, might be ensnared. It seems necessary to notice these things, lest prejudice, arising from want of due knowledge, in conjunction with a laudable jealousy for our just liberties, should pre-occupy our minds. What, then, is the nature of it? Is it anything similar to an Episcopal or a Presbyterian government among Independents? Nothing of the kind. But—

1. It implies only an avowed, open, and explicit concurrence in promoting what every pious heart must approve. What we justly approve and delight in, as having the best tendency to ameliorate the condition of mankind, should not, we think, rest with individuals, nor yet with the churches in their solitary capacities; but should be openly declared by a more general agreement, as far as possible, by all the denomination.

2. It implies a consent to be enrolled on the honourable list of those who wish to effect all the good in their power, as far as is consistent with strict Independency. Thus private judgment, local privileges, and social discipline, are left perfectly free and untouched.

3. It implies a willingness to stand connected with some subordinate association. This appears a necessary step towards additional usefulness, without the least infringement on our present rights or distinguished advantages.

4. It implies a professed readiness to receive information from the public secretary, respecting the general state of religion in the churches, with the view of increasing knowledge, and thereby of doing more good than could otherwise be accomplished; to which

may be added, an occasional reply to a few plain and easy questions from the church or the minister, with the same design.

5. It implies an agreed endeavour to prevent existing abuses and impositions. That some abuses exist, and some impositions are practised, are facts too evident to be questioned. What I particularly refer to is, the manner in which the liberal contributions of the religious public are obtained. It would be unsuitable to the present occasion to enter into particulars, either of the evils or their remedies. But I may observe, that the practicability of an effective plan for this purpose appears to me indisputable; a plan which would not diminish the sum total of liberality, which could discourage no worthy case in the Union, which would impose no restraints on the liberal friends of Zion in cases which exist within the sphere of their own observation, or of which they have sufficient knowledge: but which would prove an effectual check to all cases undeserving of public encouragement.

These, brethren, are the particulars implied in the projected union. If I saw anything which could, with the appearance of reason, be objected to them, I would notice it; but as no plausible objection occurs, let us proceed—

III. To consider the principal objects of the Union.

Were it necessary, we might, I hope all of us, conscientiously affirm, that we disclaim all political interference with the government under which we enjoy so many valuable blessings. Our objects are of a religious nature exclusively. Nor can it be intended to propose a test of orthodoxy; but every one, in this respect, is to remain accountable to the supreme Lord of conscience, and to Him alone. None who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity are excluded. All who exercise Congregational discipline among themselves, independently of other ecclesiastical control, are invited to accede. And from what has been already observed, it must appear that no uniformity even of discipline, provided it be but Congregational, can form any part of our design. In particular—

1. The first object is the diffusion of religious knowledge, "the faith of the gospel," in the darkest and most desolate parts of our country. This we profess to have in view in our individual capacities; and it is happily attempted, not only by some separate congregations, but also by district and county associations. With

these plans the proposed Union does not in the least interfere; on the contrary, they have our most cordial approbation: and what we wish further to propose is a method by which they may be rendered still more effectual, and more easy to those who are already engaged in them. And this, in my apprehension, is the true spirit of our text: that those who strive for the faith of the gospel should concentrate their forces, and be found "striving together." But who can be expected to step forward, if not those of the same views? Besides, the more public the sanction is in favour of those deserving characters who are engaged in the self-denying toil of disseminating Christian truth, the greater is their encouragement. They need much; for how arduous are their labours, and how great the difficulties with which they have to contend!

2. Another principal object is, the increase of useful knowledge in the churches; I mean that kind of reciprocal knowledge which relates to the state of all the denomination. Nor is it easy to conceive how this mutual intercourse of information can be obtained without the union which is now contemplated. What public-spirited Christian does not wish to know the state of religion among the societies with which he stands connected, beyond the boundaries of his own district or county? Are we not highly gratified, when, either by the report of a traveller, or a letter from a friend, we learn how the cause of religion and reform proceeds in any particular place? Nor is it merely the success of the gospel that may be profitably known; for the very want of religious means, especially in populous parts of the country, often awakens our sympathies, and gives nerve to our exertions. Information of this kind is frequently overlooked, because the channel of communication is not always accurate; but were the reported state of things well authenticated, whether on the bright or on the gloomy side, the interest excited for the welfare of the churches might be expected proportionably to increase, and new occasions for prayer and for praise would continually arise.

Is it not perfectly conformable with fact, and founded on the principles of our nature and of society, that increased acquaintance with any subjects, within the sphere of our influence, is ever conducive to their improvement, revival, and extension? What liberal and intelligent agriculturalist does not wish to know the general state of cultivation in every part of his country, in

proportion to his desire of improvement? What merchant, engaged in an important branch of commerce, feels not a desire of information, in the same degree that he would wish to give weight and influence to his concerns? The remark is equally applicable to the advancement of art and science, and general knowledge. And must an acquaintance with the state of religion in our own country, and especially in the denomination to which we belong, still continue a disgraceful exception? Shall the military officer who aspires after fame by distinguishing himself in the day of conflict, spare no labour to be well informed as to the state not only of his own ranks, but also those of his allies, and even of his enemies; and shall the ministers and friends of the gospel be negligent and supine, respecting the number, the discipline, the strength or weakness, the growth or decay of those who are embarked in the same cause with themselves? Whether, therefore, we sincerely desire the diffusion of religious knowledge, that is, in the language of our text, "the faith of the gospel," in the neglected parts of our country, or the increase of accurate information in our churches, inducing a better acquaintance with each other, I see no possible method so effectual for their attainment as a general union among ourselves. Let us now proceed to consider—

IV. The best mode of effecting the ends in view.

In general, it is plain, we are called by the highest authority to "stand fast in one spirit," "to be of one mind," "and to strive together." This is applicable to the cause of Christianity at large, and includes the welfare of individual societies. The Christians at Philippi would consider this injunction as applicable to themselves, not merely in their private, but in their social capacity; and in reference to the Christian interest universally. What conscientious Christian feels not that he is bound in duty to unite his efforts for the general cause of the Redeemer in the world, and especially with fellow-Christians of his own society? But if so, the inference is unavoidable, that those of the same denomination, claiming the middle place between the two extremes, demand, in reason and consistency, a corresponding degree of exertion and mutual aid. Our plan should be comprehensive, and free from all forbidden aspects. The basis ought to be as broad as possible, while the grand objects and measures of the

union are recognised. We should not identify it with a general association of ministers and delegates; for this would render it a heavy burden of trouble, expense, and unnecessary solicitude. The very principles and texture of the subordinate measure to be adopted should be of an operative nature. An open annual meeting, indeed, appears advisable for the purpose of combined counsel; but let it be optional, and not compulsory.

On a slight consideration, a spirit of jealousy might insinuate itself, suggesting that any kind of union, besides what now obtains, will tend to give some churches, or a committee, in process of time, a domineering authority over others. But this is what the very nature of the union we propose will not admit. And, if I mistake not, in this lies one of its chief excellences. If, indeed, power were intrusted,—a discretionary power of authoritative compulsion, or of ultimate decision, in any case,—the seeds of domination might in time spring up and prove injurious. But no such power will or can be conferred. There is a happy medium between the abdication of our just rights, and our present state of singular disunion. Where no power is delegated, there can be no abuse of it.

1. The union we wish to encourage should begin with mutual good-will, from Christian motives. Professing ourselves the disciples of Christ, our attachment should be purified from selfishness, in favour of the general good, and for the promotion of the Divine glory; and while thus actuated, our best interest will follow, as the shadow follows the substance.

2. The union we recommend should be cultivated, by manifesting a readiness for every good work. Promptitude in a worthy cause will discover not only the benevolence of our principle, but also its health and vigour. Let us prove how far we are disposed to do all the good in our power, by improving occasions for that purpose. Therefore—

3. Let us proceed to actual co-operation without delay. Let the churches in the metropolis give the example, and become the centre of the Union; and then let all the Congregational churches and ministers in the kingdom be respectfully invited to concur. And, for this purpose, let all the subordinate parts of the plan, and the wisest mode of their application, be immediately digested. Can any time of commencement be more propitious than the present? Let us not be intimidated by objections arising from partial information, from unfounded suspicions, or unreasonable

jealousies. But still it may be asked, What specific good can we expect from our united efforts? This leads me to consider, as proposed—

V. Some of the peculiar advantages of the Union.

Out of many which present themselves, I shall detain you by pointing out only a few: such as, that the thing itself is amiable and lovely,—that other denominations have found great benefit by being united,—that the peculiar circumstances of the Congregational churches are favourable to a union less exceptionable than most others,—that our denomination will be strengthened, without weakening others,—that it will exhibit a stronger exemplification of genuine Christianity,—and that it may be made greatly subservient to its propagation and support.

1. The union we recommend is, in itself considered, amiable and lovely. "Behold, how good and how pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity," to exist in a united form, for beneficial, religious purposes! It is like the precious ointment poured forth, of old, on the head of the high priest, or of a beloved and respected guest in the feast of friendship; as the dew that descended on the mountains of Zion, where the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore. Can we, as a brotherhood, be considered as dwelling together in unity, until we enter on some plan of union? Everything proclaims the loveliness of union in a good cause. How is the glory of the Creator displayed, but by the union of all parts of the creation directed to that end? In the plan of providence, how delightful the thought, that wheels within wheels move to produce the same result! Does not much of the beauty of art consist in one grand effect being produced by a combination of subordinate particulars? And, in the formation of social interests, with a view to answer important ends, does not much of the beauty, as well as the utility of every plan consist in harmonious co-operation?

2. Those who have made the experiment, on principles of liberty, have actually found a similar union beneficial. Indeed, it is a plain dictate of common sense, agreeing with universal experience, that the union of numbers in the same good cause gives a profitable direction, as well as countenance and courage, to individuals. And, surely, if hordes of depredators find their advantage in carrying on their projects of iniquity, while united in the same views;

if, in civil and national concerns, too, by unanimity, firmness, promptitude, and co-operation, on right principles, the general cause is benefited and advanced; what possible reason can be assigned why the cause of truth, virtue, benevolence, and religion, should receive no advantage by concentrated efforts? If some professing Christianity have by their union acquired strength, and then abused their power, the very fact proves that their bond of connexion was inconsistent with liberty. But other denominations of Christians, who have considered liberty of conscience as the sacred right of individuals, have found great and lasting advantages by their professed union among themselves. Has not the very existence of some denominations been preserved by their acting in concert? And how often have we ourselves been constrained to commend and admire the manner in which others have conducted their affairs, the sole result of order and unanimity? Let it no longer be said, that we admire in others what we do not possess among ourselves. For—

3. The peculiar circumstances of Congregational churches are favourable to a union which might be less exceptionable than most others. Respecting others it may be said, that in order to secure advantages by their union, they are obliged to make a sacrifice of some privileges which Independent churches cannot part with. However, this readiness on their part to resign some private good in consideration of a general association, is a strong proof how greatly they esteem the one in comparison with the other. And if all their advantages can be secured, without making any infringement on private rights on our part, we shall exhibit a specimen of conjunction superior to all others.

As a general principle, it is well known and acknowledged, that of any plans which contemplate profit and loss, that is most eligible which is adapted to secure the greatest profitable result at the smallest cost. Apply this to the present case, and maturely judge whether any denomination of Christians whatever has an opportunity so fair and advantageous as we now have, for securing the greatest benefit with so little inconvenience. If, without weakening ourselves, we increase our power of promoting the common benefit, surely we ought to have some reasons to urge which have never yet been offered in order to justify our indifference. Again—

4. Our own denomination will be strengthened without weakening others. I trust the candid of every name will give us credit

that the projected union is not contemplated as an engine formed in order to increase our party at their expense, but rather the more effectually to improve it for the general welfare. And let it be our steady aim, my brethren, while endeavouring to collect our scattered energies, not to disconcert other denominations, but to harmonise our own. Let us never be found sowing the seeds of discord, either directly or indirectly, but plucking up the weeds of error and iniquity wherever we find them. Thus may we hope to acquire additional power of civilising the rude, of instructing the ignorant, of disseminating truth, of discouraging evil practices, and of "provoking one another," and all around us, "to love and to good works."

5. By the union proposed, we shall be qualified to give a stronger exemplification of genuine Christianity than in a continued neglect of it. Christianity is a religion of love and union among its professors. We may be furnished with a new and practical reply to objectors, who well know, and cannot but observe, that in proportion as we are deficient in harmonious concurrence, we are not only less wise, but also less conformable to the very spirit of the religion we profess. For this, it is plain, requires us to "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel." Our Divine Lord tells us, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." And how is this best exemplified? His inspired servant answers, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." Let us therefore, my brethren, endeavour to wipe away the reproach which has often been cast upon us, and not without cause—that of all denominations of Christians, the Independent one alone is destitute of united operation in the best of causes. Let it no longer be said, that our best conceptions are enfeebled, and rendered ineffectual, for want of union among ourselves. Diversity of opinions, indeed, as to private judgment, is ever likely to exist while we remain in the body; but this consideration should not operate against what is practicable, for there is a sameness of mind and judgment which may be easily effected, without giving offence to the most scrupulous conscience, while incalculable advantages may accrue to ourselves and our posterity. Once more—

6. The union recommended may be made greatly subservient to

the propagation and support of real Christianity. It has been already shewn, that one of its grand objects is the diffusion of religious knowledge in the dark and desolate parts of our own country—a design so important, that every heart should rejoice in a plan calculated to promote it. What, in magnitude and importance, can equal a suitable display of the Divine character, and the salvation of immortal souls? And how can these ends be attained so effectually, as when Christians, churches, a whole denomination, join "in one spirit, with one mind striving together," with heart and hand, to maintain, defend, and spread abroad, "the faith of the gospel."

Before I conclude, let it be well understood, that one great advantage of the union in contemplation is, that it requires but a small expense either of time, of trouble, or of property, except in certain extraordinary cases—namely, when all the churches united are called upon, by one common organ, to countenance some object of magnitude, and of interesting importance, worthy of united effort. And, by a wisely-regulated co-operation, to achieve such ends will be a source of the purest gratification to the lovers of truth and concord, not only in our own communion, but in every other class of real Christians. Besides, when confidence is insured that our liberality is well directed and applied, it will prevent the chilling effects which are often produced by mismanagement.

If we go on and prosper, it is not indeed improbable that we shall attract closer attention than before; but this is not to be dreaded, except in a bad cause. St Paul did not think that the publicity of his cause was a misfortune, but rejoiced in it. He congratulates himself and his friends that his peculiar circumstances and fervent zeal were "manifest in all the palace of Cæsar, and in all other places" in the Roman empire; for this he concluded would tend to "the furtherance of the gospel." When he says, "in nothing terrified by your adversaries," it is implied, not only that they had adversaries who watched their motions, but also that, in those times of danger, they would probably make use of terrific threats. Christians, united for a religious and noble end, may be compared to "an army terrible with banners." A single soldier, or a small company, may be soon affrighted; but place them in a well-disciplined phalanx, or a powerful army, and terror gives way to courage. The spirit which real Christians re-

ceive is not that of fear, but the spirit "of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." Evil and envious surmises may probably be thrown out; but conscious uprightness and integrity will be a sufficient defence. When or where was any great and good enterprise attempted without opposition? Those who are not under the influence of disaffection, will drop their hostility in proportion as they are better informed; but what can stand before those who are determined to resist every effort by disuniting, and, therefore, unchristian passions? If I may candidly express my own fears, they respect those among ourselves who are uninformed or prejudiced, more than avowed opposers of religion. Indeed, our number as a body is too great to justify an expectation of universal concurrence, at first especially; but should our endeavours be attended with success in the prosecution of the work, perverse indeed would be the man who should persist against evidence, and not gladly unite in promoting his own real interest, because thereby he acts in union with others. A good work, happily chosen and wisely concerted, with the blessing of God, from whom alone proceedeth all good, needs only a cordial commencement: this will insure its more general spread as time revolves, and our posterity will not have to combat with passions which are ever strong on the appearance of what is novel. Still remember, that not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts, in the use of appropriate means, we must hope to succeed.

But, finally, whether the present attempt to unite ourselves be attended with all the success desired or not, there is a blessed period approaching, when all the faithful followers of Christ Jesus shall be of one heart and one mind,—when all prejudices and disuniting peculiarities shall be purged from their souls,—when every unhallowed passion and disposition shall be for ever banished,—when all the redeemed shall see "eye to eye," and join without exception in fulfilling the Divine will,—when every party and every person shall cordially unite in fullest harmony of praise. But in the meantime, "whereunto we have attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." Amen.

SERMON VII.

ON THE NECESSITY OF NATIONAL REFORMATION TO AVERT NATIONAL RUIN.*

JEREMIAH v. 3–9.

"O Lord, are not thine eyes upon the truth? thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return. Therefore I said, Surely these are poor; they are foolish: for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God. I will get me unto the great men, and will speak unto them; for they have known the way of the Lord, and the judgment of their God: but these have altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds. Wherefore a lion out of the forest shall slay them, and a wolf of the evening shall spoil them, a leopard shall watch over their cities: every one that goeth out thence shall be torn in pieces: because their transgressions are many, and their backslidings are increased. How shall I pardon thee for this offence? thy children have forsaken me, and sworn by them that are no gods: when I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses. They were as fed horses in the morning: every one neighed after his neighbour's wife. Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord: and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"

THESE words, my brethren, contain the threatened judgment of God, the Supreme Ruler of nations, upon the ancient Jews, for their notorious abuses of superior privileges, and for their excessive moral depravity. The similarity between the internal state of Judea, as described by this prophet, and that of Great Britain at the present moment, is, I fear, too evident to be denied; and the language of our text, however strong and pointed, is painfully applicable to our own country.

While ministers of state, and those who have the direction of our political concerns, have a task both important and arduous to perform, the ministers of religion ought not to be unconcerned

* Preached 8th February 1809, the day appointed for a General Fast.

spectators of the religious and moral state of the nation. To their sacred office is attached an awful portion of responsibility. They are under the strongest obligations to sound the seasonable alarm, by shewing to every class of people their transgressions, and the dangerous aggravations of their abounding crimes. The words which were addressed repeatedly to the prophet Ezekiel they are bound to consider as virtually directed to themselves:—"O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand."

Blessed be God, our country affords many happy instances of persons exempt from that kind of demerit which called for the strong charge exhibited against the Jewish people; we have many thousands who have no participation in the detestable sins reproved. Yet, compared with the general mass which constitutes the nation, they are, in the language of Scripture, but a little flock. This consideration will fully justify the application of censure expressed in general terms, and originally addressed to a guilty nation.

This being the case, what faithful minister of a holy and jealous God, and of those doctrines which are according to godliness, can dare continue silent? While iniquity stalks abroad at noon-day, and transgressions run down our streets ready to deluge the whole nation, silence would be a crime, and studied palliation a species of treason against the King of heaven. A discussion of the subject is indeed far from being pleasing, but it appears needful. The ministers of the gospel are under no less obligation to take up "the burden of the Lord" against offending nations, than His servants the prophets in ancient times. For our present meditation, therefore, allow me to propose, and to attempt an improvement of the following observations, which appear to be naturally implied in the passage first read.

I. God requires nothing less than truth or sincerity in a nation professing to know and serve Him. "O Lord, are not thine eyes upon the *truth?*" By the word "truth," in this connexion, we should understand what is commonly expressed by the terms

uprightness, integrity, or sincerity, in reference to what we avow. As a nation, we openly profess the Christian religion, and that this religion is heavenly in its origin, and pure in its character. We regard it not merely as worthy to be tolerated, useful to society, and even everlastingly beneficial to the individuals who cordially embrace it, and live under its genuine influence; but we acknowledge the justice of its claims to be the only religion, now in existence, which is truly Divine. What the God of truth requires is consistency of character in this profession. And what can be more reasonable than such requisition? For what is a profession of religion without sincerity of design, but the worst species of hypocrisy? To suppose that our God, who sees all hearts, can connive at insincerity and falsehood, in our concerns with Him, is to regard Him as worse than ourselves. For what reasonable being does not instantly detest the known hypocrite? And this detestation we justify in proportion to the importance of the cause which requires integrity. Hence the horror spontaneously excited in the honest mind on every appearance of perjury.

This is one grand reason why our God, as a merciful and equitable governor of His rational creatures, affords the means of religious and moral improvement. And those means we enjoy in a very eminent degree. What nation is there on the face of the globe so highly favoured as Great Britain! The ancient Jews, indeed, compared with surrounding nations, had statutes and judgments of superior excellence; but even their privileges were, in many respects, inferior to ours. And can it be imagined that our obligations to sincerity in what we profess are less urgent? Impossible. Surely God requires truth in the inward parts, a heart and life truly devoted to Him, no less at present than in any former period. In short, it is utterly inconsistent with just views of the Divine rectitude, to suppose that God sees with an eye of connivance or indifference our violation of truth, when we profess esteem for Him and His revealed will.

By a strange perversion of mind, a perversion alike ungrateful and unreasonable, the inhabitants of Judea inferred, that, because they were pre-eminently distinguished from all other nations in having the best means of religion, their moral character before God must be also better. Whereas, in reality, that very circumstance constituted the chief aggravation of their guilt. Boasting of the truth and sublimity of their historic records, their sacred code of

laws, their federal relation to God, the eminent character of Moses who delivered them from bondage, the miracles he wrought in confirmation of his mission, the interposition of judges to protect or to rescue them from slavery, and of prophets who were raised to instruct them in successive ages, they contented themselves with the mere external auxiliaries of religion, without the reality. When prophets were commissioned to warn them of impending danger, their messages were commonly disregarded, and their persons insulted. Promises were intermixed with the Divine threats, and records of miraculous interpositions, both merciful and penal, were in their hands; but they made light of them. They had been preserved by the arm of distinguished mercy, while their enemies had been visited with signal punishments; but they collected from these facts no salutary instruction. The most wonderful institution of religious order and worship was always before their eyes; but they rested in its external grandeur, while they utterly neglected its true design. They had also schools of the prophets, for the improvement of those who were destined to instruct them; but the more honest and faithful these were, generally speaking, the greater was the opposition manifested towards them. All was converted into a farcical exterior. They saw, indeed, the nations around them enveloped in the darkness of idolatry, while the light of revealed truth shone among them; a light which clearly exposed the criminality and the danger of idolatrous worship; but on account of this they were rather proud than thankful. Pride is but a feeble barrier against even the most detestable violations of truth and propriety. Hence that very people who boasted of the excellence of their own religion, were often ensnared by their idolatrous neighbours. Had they been properly thankful, they would have cultivated humility, and this would have proved an effectual preservative against the wiles of temptation. "When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he fell." "Before honour is humility, and a haughty spirit before a fall." A brighter light was never given to embolden men in works of darkness; high favours can never be conferred on any people to encourage an empty boast that their religion is preferable to all others, or to justify an indifference of heart towards the living God. How impious the hope of being excused, while trampling on every principle of sincerity and pure virtue! "O Lord, are not thine eyes upon the truth?"

Our privileges, as the inhabitants of this favoured country, are undoubtedly greater than those of the ancient Israelites. We have that gospel which brings life and immortality to light; we have the complete volume of inspiration, innumerable copies of this Bible, instructors from the pulpit and the press, together with the helps of improved literature to assist our inquiries. We do not now speak of our civil constitution, the boast of its friends and the envy of its foes, in aid of a religion which, in its peculiar sanctions, is wholly spiritual. Nor do we now mention those wholesome laws which, when duly executed, befriend religion, by punishing notorious vices, and thus check those evils which contaminate the civil body. Our comparison regards the peculiar advantages of unadulterated Christianity. We are favoured with precepts evangelically enlarged, explained, and perfectly exemplified by a greater personage than Moses; accompanied by sanctions the most awful, and promises the most precious and encouraging. And why are we thus distinguished as Christians and as Protestants? Is it that we may neglect them all, or set their benevolent and righteous Author at defiance, with impunity?

Let us consider, seriously consider, whether our creed and our practice are not at variance, and whether our obedience, compared with our privileges, is not glaringly defective. If so, it is not possible to find acceptance with that God to whom we are accountable, and before whose tribunal we must all appear. Of what use is a professed subjection, or a nominal fast, if our hearts and dispositions are not right with God? He looks not as man looketh; His eye is upon the real state and temper of the mind, the ends we purpose in our profession, and the motives by which we are actuated. He justly demands from us, from every one in particular, that our heart be contrite and our eye single. He penetrates through every veil, however artfully formed. His eyes behold, and His eyelids prove, the children of men. Remember how the infatuated Jews thought that by multiplying their external observances God would be pacified towards them, and therefore boasted "the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we." But, remember also, God declared that the pomp of rituals and the profession of reform, while the living spirit of religion was absent, were nothing better than abominations. Now, consider, if God spared not that people, whom He so frequently visited with extraordinary favours, how can we hope to be spared in our habitual disregard to the truth of

His Word, the temper of our own minds, and the moral direction of our actions? If He spared not the natural branches, can we escape His jealous eye, or ward off His threatened judgments? "O Lord, are not thine eyes upon the truth?"

II. Providential calamities and corrections should lead us, as a nation, and individually, to the exercise of pious grief on account of our sins, and to a humble submission to God's awful power. This was what God equitably required of His ancient professing people, and the want of it forms a part of the prophetic charge against them:—"Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return."

The neglect of this humiliation is a just and an awakening ground of complaint against any people, especially when providential judgments encircle them. Not to acknowledge the reality of a Divine Providence over the affairs of mortals is little short of atheistic impiety. The Jews, we know, included this momentous article in their creed; but in their practice they deviated from it in a lamentable degree. But are we, as a nation, in this respect, better than they? What evidence of it do we give? Do we occasionally profess not only the existence of a Divine Providence, but also our dependence upon it, by proclaiming and observing a national fast, and by repeating established forms? Let us remember that the Jewish people against whom the thunders of heaven were uttered did the very same. To profess the Christian religion without a habitual regard to Divine Providence in our general deportment is highly inconsistent, and disrespectful to the Supreme Ruler of the universe. If we have not learnt, and do not wish to learn, this practical part of the religion we profess, notwithstanding our boasted privileges, what reason have we to expect a better fate than the profane Israelites?

Adverse providential strokes and national corrections have a voice addressed to all. And how numerous of late have been these corrections! Our fellow-subjects have been slain by thousands, and thousands more have perished in the waves. Our manufactures and our trade languish,—our commerce is paralysed,—bankruptcies are multiplied without end,—families in every part of our land, who once abounded with comforts, groan for want of

necessaries. It would be easy to enlarge the picture of distress, but this is not my object. Who is there, from the lowest to the highest rank in our country, that does not feel the providential correction? The grand inquiry is, Do we consider the rod, and who hath appointed it? We are stricken; but have we grieved? We are consumed; but do we refuse to receive correction, making our faces harder than a rock, and refusing to return?

The voice of Providence, however significant, without pious grief and submission on our part, will do us no good, but will rather prove an occasion of deeper woe. Should we, uncircumcised in ear, and uncircumcised in heart, go on in our trespasses, and this voice so direct, so distinct, so loud, be still uttered in vain, or lost upon us, how shall we escape the righteous judgment of heaven? Assuredly, a people professing the religion of Jesus, that heareth not the trumpet sounded by Providence, shall hear another voice of tremendous import, the voice of that righteous Judge from whose final sentence there lies no appeal:—"Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind."

At present, my brethren, but how much longer we know not, judgments and mercies powerfully combine to demand our thoughtful attention. They call upon us to consider our ways, to forsake every forbidden path, and to turn our feet to God's testimonies. We are this day called, once more, to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, personally to confess and lament our sins and imperfections, as well as to mourn and sigh for the increasing abominations which pollute our land. Even the goodness of God should lead us to repentance, and His judgments should teach us righteousness. "But my Spirit," saith the Lord, "shall not always strive with man," either in providential corrections, or by messages of love and mercy. "Behold, now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." If we, like the antediluvians, disregard God's Noahs, His preachers of righteousness, He has a flood of overwhelming displeasure in reserve. He who despises the ark must perish in the waves. Or if, like Ephraim, we cleave to our respective idols, the righteous Judge will resign us over to perdition, under the weight of our iniquities. Oh that this language may not

be finally verified in us, "Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return." Let every pious heart adopt the benevolent wish of Moses, "Oh that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!"

III. When providential dispensations are slighted and misimproved, the provocation is great, and the danger truly alarming. These dispensations, in addition to the solemn calls of His Word, are public acts of the Almighty Ruler. And this constitutes an aggravating circumstance. When a disobedient son, guilty of atrocious deeds, adds falsehood and contumely to his other crimes, the father naturally proceeds to severity of correction. When friendly warnings and stern threats are disregarded, when expostulations have been used in vain, when caresses and promises have all failed, what can be expected but severer measures? If the father be wise and able, is there not just cause of alarm for such a rebellious son?

This, my brethren, as it appears to my view, is the real state of our nation. We have been to a very provoking degree disobedient to God, our heavenly Father. Our crimes have been many, great, and disgracefully prominent. We have been warned and corrected in a great variety of ways. But neither precepts nor promises, warnings of impending danger nor invitations to return, appear to stem the torrent. The public ear, like that of the adder, seems impervious to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely; but the delusions of folly, vanity, illicit pleasure, pride, and the giddy round of dissipation, seldom fail of success. Easy entrance is found for the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. In what connexion can we more suitably adopt the language of the prophet? "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but *British* Israel doth not know, my *professing* people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more:

the whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint." By sword and by fire He hath chastised us, and still we continue to multiply our offences, and to exhibit them, like Sodom. May we not then expect that righteous Heaven will, if repentance intervene not, make our plagues wonderful? And what can each persevering transgressor expect, but to be left to the reproaches of his own conscience, to the contempt of all virtuous men, and a fearful looking for of judgment that shall devour God's enemies? No nation could be more confident, could confidence without godly sincerity avail, respecting the Divine favour and protection, than that of the Jews; and yet what was the event? Look at their captivity in Babylon, their bloody civil wars, the destruction of their capital, their dispersion into foreign lands,—look at these indisputable facts, and tremble. "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish!"

Again, I ask, what can be more alarming than to see almighty justice thus provoked? Let us not deceive ourselves; God will not be mocked with impunity. Whatever any person, any nation soweth, the same in kind shall be reaped. Crimes contract guilt, and guilt exposes to just vengeance. Exalted ranks and titles are no protecting shield, but will rather prove an aggravation of guilt, and render the call for vengeance more urgent. The plea of numbers can form no excuse; the greater the multitude, the more dreadful the catastrophe. That punishment has been long delayed is so far from being consolatory, that the impending ruin will be the more tremendous. The longer the stroke of justice is deferred, the more intolerable will be its infliction. How long shall we continue to take shelter, and expect safety in refuges of lies! That other nations are equally corrupt is no diminution of our guilt, nor will the supposition, however true, cause any abatement of righteous indignation. If others are equally wicked, they are not equally privileged. Here lies the ground of alarm. "Woe to them that are named chief of the nations! Woe to them that put far away the evil day, that lie upon sumptuous beds, and stretch themselves upon their couches, that chant to the sound of the viol, and drink wine to excess; but are not grieved for the affliction of their brethren!"

When one alarming providence after another, as wave upon wave, produces no effectual reformation, but the thirst after new means of sensual gratification increases in proportion to the checks received by the demolition of preceding ones; when the exposure of the foulest abominations produces not a blush in the offenders;

when the gay and dissipated "make their faces harder than a rock," and often glory in their shame; when the grossest vices claim protection in terms worthy of the purest virtue;—what symptoms of danger can be greater? To suppose that the living God, whose name is Holy, is not awfully displeased with such deeds, and with such persons, is a mark of judicial blindness, and a near approach to the precipice of destruction. "He that, being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

IV. When moral depravity, profaneness, and irreligion, are spread through all ranks, the aggravation of national evils is still greater. This is the light in which the inspired prophet views the case:—"I said, Surely these are poor; they are foolish: for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God:" they have not enjoyed equal advantages for information. "I will get me unto the great men, and will speak unto them; for they have known the way of the Lord, and the judgment of their God:" they have had advantages far superior to the others. "But these have altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds."

When the lower orders of society are generally infected with false views of moral duties and religious obligations, respecting both the present and a future state, they must needs form an awful majority. In the appointment of an all-wise Providence, the labouring, and comparatively uneducated class are far more numerous than the men of wealth and independence. In most communities, our own not excepted, not one in ten receives a liberal education; and in many places the well-instructed are in a proportion less than one in twenty. When, therefore, the lower classes, with passions unsubdued by discipline, and minds uninformed by education, indulge their sensual inclinations; when they wallow in base lusts, hate instruction, and despise reproof; when parents neglect the care of their offspring in the most important concerns, and children grow up in similar impiety;—among such persons, what national virtue that deserves the name can be expected? Hence, cursing, swearing, and blasphemy, may be heard in every village; hence, falsehood and perjury in every court of justice; hence, quarrels and fightings, the profanation of the Sabbath, frequent thefts, robberies, and murders; hence, the unexampled prevalence of prostitution; hence, numerous prisoners,

and condemned malefactors. And even how few of the guilty, as viewed by Him whose eyes are in every place beholding the evil and the good, are brought to these ignominious ends. For one criminal who is detected by human vigilance, many, most probably, die undiscovered. But though the eye of public justice may never behold their crimes, they cannot elude His notice before "whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid;" before whom hell is naked, and destruction hath no covering.

But when the higher orders, who ought from their superior advantages to know better, are corrupt, the case is still worse. Then the root of national morals is bad; the fountain is infected. Thus the fountain and the streams, the root and the branches, the whole body of the people, were characterised by Jeremiah in our text: if the poor were foolish, and had not known the way of the Lord, the rich had altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds. And the same dismal fact is recorded by the prophet Isaiah; who testifies concerning the body politic, that from the sole of the foot even unto the head there was no soundness in it. He therefore elevates his voice:—"Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord. . . . . When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; . . . . the calling of assemblies I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your appointed feasts [and the same is applicable to appointed fasts] my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood."

By the mere show of solemn worship, the persons reproved thought that the threatened danger would be averted, and that national prosperity must ensue. But the righteous Judge regarded this parade as worthy of being registered among their insulting crimes. For, on account of these acts of insincerity, among other provocations, "behold, the Lord of hosts doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah the stay and the staff, ... the mighty man and the man of war, the judge and the prophet, the prudent and the ancient, the captain and the honourable man, the

counsellor, the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator." The bold and righteous charge runs yet higher:—"The show of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not." Is there no woe for these things? Yes:—"Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves." So deeply sunk were they in sensuality, that they suffered base and artful women to exert their influence in the most weighty concerns, and in the most shameless manner. "As for my people," saith God, "children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they who lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths. . . . . The Lord will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof."

How far these charges lie direct against the higher ranks in this nation, let the considerate and the unprejudiced judge. Let these judge whether a large proportion of them have not altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds. "When I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses. They were as fed horses in the morning; every one neighed after his neighbour's wife." Can any picture be at once more accurate, or more shocking? O horrible degradation of human nature! In vain is the preacher's voice raised against such characters, for the awful denunciations of Heaven are by them disregarded. But though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished. Their sins will find them out. "Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."

What cares the noble sensualist by whom he is known, and by whom he is seen, if he can seduce beauty? "He is as a fed horse in the morning," equally lustful, and with as little shame. Hence divorces without end; and hence family breaches, disgusts, mutual recriminations, corrupt practices, and fatal duels. When one favourite object of criminal gratification is discarded, the play or the opera will soon furnish another. O fascinating schools of dissipation and ruin! But the pleasures of sin are only for a season. At the close, they shall eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. "For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. Their ways are crooked, and they are froward in their paths. These are they who are not delivered from the strange woman, even from the stranger that flattereth with her words; who

forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God." These are the simple ones who are not aware that "her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead." "For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil: but her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death, her steps take hold on hell." And lest they should ponder the path of life, or meditate a reform, "her ways are moveable."

How affecting are these royal words addressed to a debauchee! —"Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house; lest thou give thine honour unto others, and thy years unto the cruel. Lest strangers be filled with thy wealth; and thy labours be in the house of a stranger; and thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed, and say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me! I was almost in all evil, in the midst of the congregation and assembly." These are the persons "who eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence." Their own iniquities shall take them, and they shall be holden with the cords of their sins. They shall die without instruction, and in the greatness of their folly they shall go astray. "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burnt? So he that goeth in to his neighbour's wife; whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent. . . . . Whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul. A wound and dishonour shall he get, and his reproach shall not be wiped away."

And what though the seducer be beautiful, elegant, and subtle of heart? What though she can boast, "I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt; I have perfumed my bed." If by her fair speech and flattering lips she causeth him to yield, "he goeth after her as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; till a dart strike through his liver, as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life. . . . . She hath cast down many wounded; yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death." When these licentious practices attach to a few individuals only, the virtuous of both sexes must view them with pain and disgust. But when a large portion of the community, forming in the aggre-

gate a hideous multitude, appears to be infected with this worst of all plagues, how distressing the consideration! "Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord; and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" Oh that future history may never have to record that Britain, by following the licentiousness of France, has brought itself to a similar crisis and catastrophe!

V. Such a nation, without a speedy reform, has every reason to expect the Divine vengeance. What less can be implied in these words:—"Wherefore a lion out of the forest shall slay them, and a wolf of the evening shall spoil them, a leopard shall watch over their cities: every one that goeth out thence shall be torn in pieces; because their transgressions are many, and their backslidings are increased." It cannot be supposed that even in Judea the threatening was to be taken literally. An exposure to the power of these fierce animals being not a little terrifying to humanity, the scene is employed to represent imminent danger. Now, what is the chief cause of a nation's danger? Sin, my brethren, especially such as I have been exposing, is the ruin, the harbinger of the total destruction as well as the reproach of any people; while righteousness alone preserves and exalts. Without the salt of real virtue, the whole mass goes to corruption. Then a scene truly terrific may be expected: something far more dreadful than the lion, the wolf, and the leopard. Who would not prefer the ravages of these to the attacks of enraged rioters, or the horrors of a civil war? Besides, one nation is often chastised by another. And what is so destructive as a ferocious and exasperated enemy in arms, when death, imprisonment, or vassalage threatens every inhabitant,—when delicate and virtuous women, who behold their fathers, their husbands, or brothers weltering in their gore, see also unprincipled ruffians approaching them, but deaf to their shrieks and entreaties.

Let us not hastily conclude that our numbers, discipline, and courage are sufficient to ward off every attack. Success, or want of success, depends upon the plan of Providence. We should reflect what ends the Supreme Ruler has to answer,—what nations to chastise and humble,—who are the instruments of that chastisement,—and of several nations to be ultimately punished, which of them is to be brought first to correction. That one should prove the more powerful and victorious for a time, is no sufficient evi-

dence that its own fate is not hastening on when the measure of its iniquity is fulfilled. The Assyrians were for a season the rod of Jehovah's anger, but when no longer needed for the correction of others, they also met their doom.

Nor can the most privileged of nations escape without a national reform. The punishment may for a time be delayed, but it will not be wholly averted. "Hear this word which the Lord hath spoken, You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities. Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? The lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy? An adversary there shall be even round about the land; and he shall bring down thy strength from thee, and thy palaces shall be spoiled. I will smite the winter-house with the summer-house; and the houses of ivory shall perish, and the great houses shall have an end, saith the Lord."

Guilty communities are punished in this life, and that from the very nature of the case. In a future state, and in the general judgment, civil relations are extinct. It is then that individuals must answer for what they have done in the body, whether it be good or evil. But national crimes, without humiliation and reform, must be visited with temporal punishments. Hence the God of the whole earth will not only bring every work into judgment, both good and evil, but will moreover punish the nations of the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible; even the glory of kingdoms shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. "The Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth." "Yea, saith God, I will punish all them that are circumcised with the uncircumcised." "How shall I pardon thee for this? thy children have forsaken me." "They proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the Lord. . . . . They will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth; they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity. . . . . Shall I not visit them for these things? saith the Lord; shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" May the solemn fact be indelibly recorded in our memory, and written on our heart, that the only way to avert the visitation of

God, in ruinous punishment, is timely and unfeigned reformation.

And what is the first step of such a reformation? It is to remove abuses, and to put away the evil of our doings. Without this, public fasts are but so many insults to the King of kings. To make religion bow to politics, to accommodate the laws of heaven to our own secular interest and aggrandisement, to countenance virtue and religion so far only as they may prove subservient to wealth and power, will never meet with the Divine approbation. To act in this manner is the same in fact as to join ourselves to idols, and thus to provoke the Holy One of Israel unto anger. If we would obtain sparing mercy, we must put away these idols; we must shake our hands from receiving bribes, leave off falsehood and perjury, renounce the gain of dishonesty, avoid the profanation of the sacred name, the holy sabbaths, and the solemn institutions of that God whom we profess to worship, and of that Redeemer from whom we expect salvation. Let us have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. Notorious vices of every kind must be discouraged and suppressed. Oh that those whom it concerns (and many, very many, in our land are deeply implicated) would lay to heart the warning of Jehovah! "Because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the well-favoured, behold, I am against thee, saith the Lord of hosts; I will discover thy skirts upon thy face, and I will shew the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame."

The next step of national reform is a suitable acknowledgment of God and His revealed will. Who in our land of light, this valley of vision, can be so ignorant as not to know, or so stupid as not to acknowledge, that our God is the source of all goodness, of all power, wisdom, and real happiness? Can felicity be obtained without His favour? Is there any valuable power or promotion, wisdom or prudence, independently of Him? Or is it possible for any to be truly good, except by participation in His sovereign bounty and gracious influence? In His favour is life, and they who continue far from Him, by wicked works, shall perish. The ways of holy wisdom alone are ways of pleasantness and peace. And let us remember that this wisdom is from above, and that it may be known by the marks: it is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. But if you have bitter envying

and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth; this wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.

That alone is true wisdom which has the all-sufficient God for its ultimate end, and which humbly regards the Divine will as the only adequate director. Consulting this infallible guide, we learn that there is no other way to God but that new and living one which is consecrated with the blood of the everlasting covenant. "I am the way," saith Jesus Christ, the true witness; "no one cometh unto the Father but by me." No, my brethren, there is no other name under heaven, given among men, but that of the blessed Jesus, whereby we can be saved from sin and endless perdition. Out of Him there is no justification of life; out of Him, our condemnation is sealed. They who despise, they who neglect this method of deliverance, cannot escape final destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power. This is the condemnation, that light, gospel light, is come into the world, but men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. "This is my beloved Son," saith God, "in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." If he who despised Moses' law died without mercy, of how much severer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who tramples upon the appointment of sovereign mercy, and the condescensions of the Divine Saviour! No one can be reconciled to our offended God but in the way of His own appointment. The terms of reconciliation are clearly revealed; and they who make light of these terms, founded in infinite wisdom and grace, are without excuse.

Would we prove to the satisfaction of our own minds, and the conviction of others, that we are indeed reconciled to God? Let us cultivate an unfeigned and deep humiliation, repent of our sins, and believe with the heart unto righteousness. Let us address the God of mercy with earnest supplication, and seek pardon and acceptance through the mediation and merits of the Divine Redeemer. Let us humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may, according to His gracious promise, exalt us in due season. Discarding base lusts and false principles of honour, which domineer over the mind as cruel tyrants, let us draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to us.

True reformation includes a right improvement of religious privileges. It is folly to suppose that any people are favoured

with privileges, without being laid under proportionable obligations; or that those of Christianity are afforded us as a ground of boast, while we neglect a serious and conscientious use of them for the purposes of improved knowledge and an ornamental conduct. Let us examine ourselves whether our high distinction, in comparison of others, be not a gift in the hand of a fool who has no heart to use it. Let us search and try our ways, and turn our feet to God's testimonies. An attempt to shake off obligations and consequences is the most consummate folly. He that will not reform, individually considered, must in spite of all his efforts and frivolous excuses, be the subject of guilt, remorse, and misery; and collectively considered, without national reform, the only alternative is national ruin.

May God, of His infinite mercy, create in us a clean heart, renew a right spirit within us, and enable us to live the remnant of our days in a manner worthy of our profession, to the glory of His holy name! Amen.

SERMON VIII.

APOSTOLIC BENEVOLENCE TOWARDS THE JEWS RECOMMENDED FOR IMITATION.*

ROMANS X. 1-4.

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

BEFORE I proceed to my intended subject, allow me to express the feelings of my heart at the sight of this numerous and respectable audience. The occasion which has brought us together is extremely interesting and important. But, I am constrained to add, that an awful kind of responsibility rests upon my mind. Who can tell what may be the everlasting consequences of the present service? The omniscient God knows all consequences with infallible precision. He knows what hearts will be opened to receive the truth, or will be closed against it; who will be softened to conviction, or hardened in impenitence; who will be refreshed and animated, and to whom the message will prove "a savour of death unto death."

In so promiscuous an assembly, it is not improbable that there are some who have formed a fixed determination not to be moved by any statement that can be made in favour of an institution like the present; as, on the other hand, there may be some whose expectations are too much raised. Let me, therefore, entreat you all to turn your thoughts from the instrument who has the honour

* Preached at the request of the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews.

of addressing you, and endeavour to direct them to the Fountain of all grace and mercy. If thus engaged, all may receive some lasting benefit. For what method is so likely to conduct us to the temple of Divine truth, and consequently to the regions of eternal blessedness?

The subject to which I now solicit your attention is—*Christian benevolence towards the Jews,* the descendants of the venerable Abraham. The praise of this renowned patriarch has been in all the churches of the faithful through every age; and many encouraging intimations are given in the sacred oracles respecting future blessings to be conferred upon his posterity. This consideration, among many others, ought to operate as a powerful stimulus upon Christians to exert themselves in their favour. This argument has been often presented to you with advantage, and therefore I shall not now press a repetition of it. What I wish, on the present occasion, is to recommend, more particularly, for your imitation, the *example of the apostle Paul.*

This extraordinary character was "a Hebrew of the Hebrews," that is, a Jew on the father and mother's side; he was brought up in a seminary of distinction at Jerusalem, and received the confidence of the Jewish rulers. He was uncommonly zealous for the support of the Hebrew rites and customs, and against the newly-risen sect, who professed that Jesus of Nazareth fully answered the character of the Messiah described by the prophets. While in the height of his zeal, and in one of his commissioned excursions between Jerusalem and Damascus, he was arrested in a very remarkable manner; he heard a voice, and felt a power, to which he had before been a stranger. So singular and so forcible was this interposition, in all its circumstances, which he himself has distinctly related, that it terminated in a decided and wonderful change of thinking and acting. That very cause which hitherto he had laboured to suppress, he was constrained, from the fullest conviction, to espouse and to propagate.

This could not fail to give his brethren with whom he had been connected great umbrage; and, indeed, as might be expected, while their minds remained unchanged, their former attachment to him was converted into determined opposition. They now consider him as their enemy, because, renouncing their fellowship, he attached himself to the new sect. They load him with

reproaches, and regard him as an apostate from the true religion, who deserves not to live. But how does he requite their conduct? He returns blessing for cursing, and the purest benevolence for their hatred. Of this disposition he gives the strongest proofs. He sheds for them tears of compassion; he pours forth ardent supplications to the Father of mercies on their behalf; and for the sincerity of his motives, he makes the most emphatic protestations, with a solemn appeal to the Supreme Judge of all thoughts, words, and actions. He labours day and night, by writing, by preaching, by disputing; and proves that he is no apostate from the true religion, but that they had false notions of their own Scriptures; and that while they pretended to adhere to the letter, he and his companions imbibed the spirit of those holy records, and in no respect opposed them, according to their sublime import.

Here, my Christian friends, we have a pattern highly worthy of our imitation. And with a view to recommend it, I call your candid attention to reflect with me on, *first*, the proper nature, *secondly*, the peculiar objects, *thirdly*, the powerful obstacles, and, *fourthly*, the legitimate exercise of Christian benevolence towards the Jews. They think that they do God service in opposing us; but we know that their thoughts are not founded in truth, and that, sooner or later, they must yield to that Shepherd of Israel whom they now reject. Attend, then, while I endeavour to consider—

I. The *proper nature* of that benevolence which was exemplified by the apostle Paul, and which is now recommended to your notice. It was not a transitory flash of light, without heat,—it was not a weak wish, devoid of energetic efforts,—it was not a selfish desire to acquire fame, or to increase a party,—nor was it hasty and abrupt, liable to be shaken with every blast of opposition, either from those whose best interests it sought, or from others who took wrong views of the subject. But the temper of mind now recommended had the following characters:—

1. It was deeply seated in the heart. A benevolence which is not a rooted principle will finally die away. Love, benevolent love, is the very essence of all real religion, and of all true virtue. It is of little moment what pretensions we have to virtue, or what professions we make of religion, if Divine love be absent. While Saul of Tarsus opposed the Christians, (we appeal to his own de-

clarations,) his heart was not in a right state, he was not under the influence of pure benevolence, nor did he enter into the true spirit of revealed religion. His change of external profession originated in a change within. Had he possessed the same inward temper, and the same spirit of faith, with Abraham and Moses, he never would have persecuted the Christians. On the contrary, he would have embraced them in the arms of affection. That change from one religion to another which does not spring from the heart, as the seat of pure love to God and men, is nothing better than a hypocritical pretence. It has no deepness of earth, its root is shallow, and the heat of trial dries up its moisture. If, therefore, we would be fruitful to God, and profitable to men, let us often examine our own hearts, and see, not only that the root of the matter be found in us, but also that it strike deeply, and be well nourished by our nearness to and communion with God.

2. It was the effect of knowledge. The wise king of Israel observes, "That the soul be without knowledge, it is not good." No specific truth can be loved while we remain ignorant of its character. Conviction is the fruit of knowledge, and so is all acceptable devotion. When the mind is divinely enlightened, and consequently well informed, the religious tenets we contemplate appear in their due proportion and importance. We are then secured from taking "sweet for bitter, and bitter for sweet; the straight for crooked, and the crooked for straight." We then perceive erroneous sentiments and conduct, and shun them; we behold the beauty of holiness, and love it. The character of God appears superlatively amiable, and wisdom's ways become ways of pleasantness. Ignorance is a gloomy region, where nothing spiritually excellent is disclosed; but knowledge dispels the gloom, and the objects appear distinct and defined. While Saul was a zealous persecutor, he was ignorant of God and of himself; he knew not the spirituality of the law, nor the nature of the promises made to the fathers. Thus he laboured in the dark, and ignorance was the parent of his devotion. But when a heavenly light shone into his mind, his benevolent heart loved, and pitied, and prayed for his very enemies. And thus, my brethren, let it be our constant endeavour to possess more Divine light, that all our efforts may be strengthened by knowledge, derived from the Spirit and Word of God, and directed by that wisdom which is from above.

3. It was an operative principle, manifesting itself in substantial

acts of kindness. This principle, resembling its Divine Author, not only partakes of goodness, but also imparts it. Christian benevolence cannot endure bitterness and wrath, envy and strife. If an enemy hunger, it feeds him; if he thirst, it gives him drink; if naked, it clothes him; if ignorant, it instructs him; if out of the way of truth and righteousness, it endeavours to reclaim him. The kindness exercised is like that of a faithful shepherd to a wandering sheep; like that of a firm friend in the season of adversity; or like that of a loving parent interested for the welfare of his child. This tree is not only deeply rooted, but is also, like celestial wisdom, "full of mercy and good fruit." Many of its possessors may say, "Silver and gold have we none;" but what they have, by which God may be honoured, and men benefited, they are willing to impart. Their hearts are enlarged; they offer the sacrifice of prayer and praise; they recommend religion, and promote it by what talent they have; and thus in effect proclaim to all around them, "Come, taste and see how good the Lord is." And those of them who are favoured with property cannot be content with saying, "Be thou clothed, be thou warmed," without bestowing upon suitable objects, under the direction of holy prudence, the things that are needful. This leads me to add—

4. It was a disinterested and self-denying principle. As this is the proper nature of Christian benevolence, so it is an eminent part of its excellence. It stands directly opposite to that odious vice called selfishness. It is indeed perfectly consistent with some regard to ourselves; but it does not rest there. Selfishness is an idol, to which all others are expected to pay homage; but real benevolence refers everything to God as its ultimate end, because He alone is worthy. A man without real religion would fain bring every ray to centre in himself, as the common focus; but benevolence moves in a contrary direction: love and kindness diffuse themselves as from a radiant point, to enlighten and to cheer every capable object. Selfishness is a vortex in which everything within its power is gulfed; but benevolence expands itself, like circling waves.

5. It was a patient and persevering principle. It was not only kind, as exemplified by St Paul, but it "suffered long;" it was not weary in well-doing; it coped with unparalleled difficulties, and surmounted stupendous obstacles. Though for his love this wonderful character received only hatred and the most marked

insults, patience had its perfect work. His soul was filled with a benevolent flame, and therefore he went from synagogue to synagogue, from city to city, from country to country; he endured hunger and thirst, nakedness and buffeting, and had no certain dwelling-place. Being reviled, he blessed; being persecuted, he suffered it without retaliation; being defamed, he exercised entreaties to men and supplications to God. Though he was free from all men, yet he made himself servant unto all, that he might gain the more to partake with him of the same privileges. He endured all things for the elect's sake, that they also might obtain eternal salvation, which he knew could be obtained only in Christ Jesus. We come now to consider—

II. The *peculiar objects* of that benevolence which was exemplified by St Paul, and which is now recommended for imitation. Though in its aim it was unbounded, and the Gentile world was his peculiar province, while his brethren in the apostleship laboured professedly among the Jews, yet his kinsmen, however disaffected to him, had the warmest affections of his heart. "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed [or, excommunicated] from Christ [*i.e.*, the Christian assembly] for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." As if he had said, I could willingly undergo the severest censure from my most intimate friends, resembling my expulsion from the synagogue, if I could but be serviceable to my mistaken brethren of the seed of Abraham. "My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved,"—saved from their impending calamities, and that their souls might be saved eternally. Hence we observe, that the peculiar objects he had in view were these two: the persons here called "Israel;" and their highest welfare—"that they might be saved."

1. The persons he had peculiarly in view were the Israelites, or Jews. Of these none were excepted, his loving heart included them all,—the learned and the ignorant, the rich and the poor, the old and the young. As none were excluded from the overtures of Divine mercy, nay, as the apostolic commission was to begin at Jerusalem, all the lost sheep of the house of Israel were objects of apostolic solicitude and exertion. And, indeed, the more deter-

mined and resolute any of them were against the gospel, the greater need was there of compassion; for their guilt and danger were aggravated in proportion. While the apostle travelled from place to place, how was his soul filled with concern, how assiduous were his labours for their better information! Could he, from earnestness of desire, have shed tears of blood over them, he would have done it; for his unfeigned love towards them thought no sacrifice too great on their account. But all this was subservient to the other object he had in view:—

2. Their highest, their eternal welfare. "My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." St Paul had thoroughly learned that all men, through sin, are become obnoxious to the curse denounced on transgressors by the righteous law of God, and that there is no other name given among men whereby they can be saved, if Christ be rejected. He knew that all who slight the divinely-appointed mode of deliverance are as ground that bears only briers and thorns, whose end is to be burned. He knew that the axe is laid to the root of each tree, and that every one which beareth not good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. He knew it was in vain for the Jews to boast of their descent from Abraham, and of their laws from Moses; or that they were planted a noble vine, if they bore not corresponding fruit. He knew the force of that awful representation by the prophet:—"Son of man, What is the vine-tree more than any tree, or than a branch among the trees of the forest? Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work? or will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon? Behold, it is cast into the fire for fuel; the fire devoureth both the ends of it, and the midst of it is burnt: is it meet for any work?"* A vine, you all know, while fruitful, is a noble tree, bearing the choicest fruit; but when fruitless it is less valuable than any tree of the forest. Hence the prophet adds,—"Behold, when it was whole, it was meet for no work: how much less shall it be meet for any work, when the fire hath devoured it, and it is burned? Therefore thus saith the Lord God, As the vine-tree among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so will I give the inhabitants of Jerusalem."† He that will not be saved in God's own way, must be destroyed without remedy. But to all the living it is an accepted time, and a day of salvation. The Lord is now slow to anger, and of great

* Ezek. xv. 2–4. † Ver. 5, 6.

mercy; He waiteth to be gracious. Nevertheless, if any continue to neglect the salvation which God has graciously prepared,—the great salvation from sin and hell, which consists in eternal happiness,—how shall they escape? There remains no more sacrifice for sin. His Spirit shall not always strive with man, in order to reclaim him; nor shall the means of salvation to individuals be of long continuance. "For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever."* "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him, that he should still live for ever, and not see corruption."† The apostle felt, and let us, my brethren, feel the import of those words of Moses:—"They are a nation void of counsel, neither is there any understanding in them. Oh that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!"‡ Time is rolling on apace, nor stays for any man. Yet a little while, and he must quit every subterfuge; he must feel the weakness of every false prop, and the insufficiency of every sandy foundation. The devouring fire shall try every man's work; and we draw nearer to the awful period every day, every moment. Salvation must begin in this life, or never. Heaven or hell must be the final receptacles of all mankind. St Paul deeply felt the momentous influence of such considerations. Oh that we may feel them more and more! Let us now consider—

III. The *powerful obstacles* which the benevolence of St Paul, when directed to the Jews, had to encounter. He had to contend with the prejudices of education; with a lively jealousy for religious peculiarities; with minds ignorant of God's righteousness, and not religiously submissive; with false notions respecting the Messiah, and with the supposed incompatibility between the religion of Moses and that of Jesus; with a people immured in false refuges, and deterred by the fear of man. These were the difficulties with which St Paul had to struggle, the powerful obstacles to the exercise of his benevolence; and the manner in which he conducted himself in these circumstances is eminently worthy of our imitation. Consider, then, how he had before him, as a powerful phalanx—

1. The prejudices of education. God had revealed Himself to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, their ancestors, and especially to

* Psalm xlix. 8. † Ver. 7, 9. ‡ Deut. xxxii. 28, 29.

Moses and the prophets in a very signal manner. This was a point confessed on both sides. He had also enjoined ordinances of worship accompanied with awful sanctions, and with an evidence of authority allowed by each party to be incontestable. He had often interposed in favour of Israel, by the symbols of His presence, and by rescuing them from the hand of their enemies. Angels had been commissioned to promote their welfare, and to destroy their opposers. Their history abounds with instances of a Providence that peculiarly befriended them, and of a care eminently watchful and parental. Besides, they had been educated in the doctrine of the unity of God, (although accompanied indeed with intimations of a trinity in that unity,) and the obligations of observing His commands were clear and peremptory.

These things considered, we may well suppose how their minds would stand affected towards an apprehended opposition. And it must be allowed, that if St Paul had denied these facts, no charge against him would have been too severe. But so far was he from denying, that he clearly avowed and firmly maintained them. The only point on which he differed from his brethren was respecting the conclusions that ought to be drawn from them. They were strenuous in maintaining that the Jewish religion was as a temple, while the Christian was a needless appendage to it, or rather an insulting and injurious altar against altar. But St Paul, on the contrary, was fully convinced that Judaism, in its Divine institution, was but a porch leading to the Christian temple, and that all the Levitical and Mosaic institutions were but shadows of better things.

2. Another powerful opposition arose from their zeal and jealousy for the peculiarities of their faith, which is common to all religious parties prior to impartial examination. Witness the blind attachment of the Egyptians to their idols; of the Philistines to their Dagon; the Ephesians to their Diana; the Romans to their demigods; and the Mohammedans to their pretended prophet. In fact, a strong and resolute adherence to the religion in which we are brought up is no certain test of either truth or falsehood. Let every religion be brought to a surer standard. "Prove all things, and hold fast that which is good." We everywhere find that customs and traditions, and even the most superstitious opinions and practices, take deep root. Never were the inhabitants

of Jerusalem more zealous for the honour of the true God than the men of Ashdod for the credit of Dagon, or the inhabitants of Ephesus for the greatness of Diana.

These principles, common to all mankind, while governed by example and selfish interest, at the expense of reason, of reflection, and of truth, in connexion with higher pretensions,—pretensions indeed well established of a revelation from heaven contained in the Hebrew Scriptures,—may fully account for that zeal and jealousy with which St Paul had to contend. "For I bear them record," says he, "that they have a zeal of God." Not only a zeal which is common to all devotees, whatever be the object of their worship, but a zeal which has the true God for its object, strengthened by a revelation of His will, contained in writings committed to their care. But then he was constrained to add that their zeal was "not according to knowledge." And this leads me to notice another powerful obstacle:—

3. Their ignorance of God's righteousness. "For," says the apostle, "they being ignorant of God's righteousness," went "about to establish their own righteousness." If this was eminently characteristic of the Jews eighteen hundred years ago, it is but too applicable to those of the present day. For, besides the peculiar circumstances before mentioned,—the adoption of their ancestors to a covenant-relation with the true God, to whom inspired prophets were sent, and the sacred oracles were intrusted,—there is in every child of man an invariable propensity to set up his own righteousness as the ground of acceptance with God. It is the case with nominal Christians, as well as others, until they are inwardly taught by the Holy Spirit. Even those indeed who are diligently instructed in the contrary doctrine from the Scriptures have the same propensity to trust in themselves, either that they are righteous, or that they can be righteous by a little more diligence. They will, it is true, acknowledge that they have sinned; but they hope that their repentance and reformation will be effectual to secure the mercy of God. "And thus they wrap it up." They do not consider that God has an absolute right to prescribe the method of bestowing favours; they do not reflect that they have lost all claim, and that they lie obnoxious to Divine justice; they are not aware that under no dispensation of revealed religion was human righteousness of itself sufficient, ever since the apostasy of Adam. Had there been any law or any rule of obedience, which could

have given life, a Messiah would not have been necessary. But now the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, which is unto all, and upon all them that believe, without difference. Of this most of the ancient Jews were ignorant; and oh that their posterity were better informed! And I will add, oh that many of those who bear the name of Christians were not building on the same insecure foundation!

And now, my friends and brethren, before we proceed, let us examine ourselves on this momentous point. Have we learned, with Abraham, with David, with St Paul, with all the approved servants of God, that there is no pardon of sin, no Divine acceptance, but in a righteousness, a federal, perfect righteousness, prepared by the eternal Father, and wrought out by the Messiah? Do we rest the whole weight of our soul, and build all our hopes of salvation and happiness, on this foundation laid in Zion? Can we say that we count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord? Is it our wish and prayer that we may be found in Him, not having our own righteousness, which is of the law, but possessing the righteousness which is from God, and which is received by faith? Are we convinced that by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified? Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye, therefore, that they who are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham, and with him are blessed. This leads to another obstacle:—

4. A mind not religiously submissive. They "have not," says the apostle, "submitted themselves to the righteousness of God." Submission to God is essential to all true religion. But prejudice, false zeal, and ignorance of God's righteousness, are decided enemies to this humble temper of mind. Pride, a want of submissive resignation to the will of God, was the condemnation of the devil, and will ever prove, when unsubdued, the condemnation of men. Until the spirit of humility be felt, enmity and opposition to the truth will prevail. He who would learn of Jesus must be meek and lowly in heart. As long as we are wise in our own conceit, or lean to our own understanding, we cannot be wise to salvation, or properly understand the mysteries of the kingdom of God. The seeds of heavenly truth will not take root in the soil of self-sufficiency; but in the good ground of submission to God's will and righteousness they will take deep root, will spring up, and bring

forth fruit, some a hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, and some thirty-fold. Another obstacle was—

5. False notions of the Messiah. "For Christ," says St Paul, "is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." The Jews looked for a deliverer very different from the one whom we preach. They expected,—and their descendants of the present day fatally imitate them,—they expected a deliverer of a temporal and splendid aspect; one whose office it would be to rescue the seed of Abraham from civil bondage; one who would not set aside the Levitical services, but restore them to their pristine form. But any pretended Messiah who should do this would require another Messiah. For it is not possible, in the nature of things, that the blood and sacrifices of brute beasts should take away sin. If the Levitical sacrifices were not typical of another sacrifice of a different kind, where was the wisdom of their institution? They, therefore, who would be satisfied with a Messiah who would restore the Jews to their former state only, their priesthood, their sacrifices and ceremonies, could gain no substantial benefit, no remission of sin, no righteousness or acceptance with God, because the end of the law would be still wanting. The value of any means must evidently be estimated from their adaptation to answer a higher end. If they do not render the comers thereunto perfect, if they do not purify the conscience, if they do not constitute us righteous, it is evident they are but shadows without a substance, they are sacrifices without a meaning, a building without a foundation.

These false notions were the stronghold of the Jews, while rejecting Jesus as the Christ, or the promised Messiah. But they who, with the woman of Samaria, taste of the living water, have indubitable evidence, in their own experience, that Jesus imparts that very thing for which the sacrifices were originally appointed. This, my brethren, we know by experience, and we cannot but ardently desire that others may be partakers of the same blessing. And this it was that prompted St Paul, from the fulness of his benevolent spirit, to forego the comforts of this life, to face so many dangers, to endure so many reproaches, to labour so abundantly among Jews and Gentiles, and to count all things else but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. He knew Him to be the Sun of righteousness, who should come with healing in His wings—' a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory

of His people Israel." Those very things which the Jews regarded as great stumblingblocks,—His lowly appearance, His humbling doctrine, the purity of His precepts, His authoritative reproofs, His claims of honour, and, finally, His crucifixion,—were, in reality, important proofs of His Messiahship. To the preceding particulars we may add—

6. The supposed incompatibility between the religion of Moses and that of Jesus. The Jews did not perceive how the Messiah could be the end of the law to every one that believeth. Had they not been ignorant of this principle,—a principle, however, which is abundantly implied in their own Scriptures,—they would have seen that no other Messiah but one resembling Jesus could possibly do them any essential service. A powerful prince, a temporal deliverer, one who should restore them to their own land, or invest them with splendour and consequence among the nations of the earth, could never answer the end of the law and the prophets; for what tendency have these things to make them righteous, holy, and happy in another world? These distinctions they might obtain, and yet continue as wicked as ever, and, therefore, be everlastingly miserable.

They who harbour these notions convert the religion of the Bible into a mere political engine; without reflecting, that politicians and patriots, of the greatest eminence, have souls to be saved as well as others; and that neither politics nor patriotism, neither wealth nor splendour, can make one soul of man happy, either here or hereafter. If God's image, consisting in righteousness and holiness, be not found in the soul, and exemplified in the life and conduct, there can be no solid and lasting felicity. However, the religion of Jesus does not subvert that of Moses, rightly understood, according to God's intention, but rather perfects it. Nay, further, it is demonstrable that he who rejects the religion of Jesus virtually rejects that of Moses, however tenacious he may be of the latter. And were the conscience unbribed, and permitted to speak, it would testify without demur that Moses without a Messiah, without a Messiah of the character of Jesus, could give no rest nor peace to any human breast. But, against the clamours of guilt, the Jews, both in the days of St Paul, and now, have—

7. Many unauthorised subterfuges. These are provided by men, and not by the institution of God. They are imaginary modes of

obtaining the remission of sin: such as pleading relation to Abraham, repeating prayers, being punctual in the observance of ceremonies, paying implicit submission to the rules of their pretended guardians, and the traditions of the ancients. But how is it possible for these, or any such things, to procure the pardon of sin? The mind must be dark as midnight, and reason, as well as the Holy Scriptures, most awfully perverted, before the thought can be admitted. A sinful creature can hope for pardon on the ground of sovereign mercy only, and God alone can prescribe the mode and the terms of obtaining it. But where has He testified that any shall be pardoned and saved because they are the descendants of Abraham, because they repeat prayers, because they are punctual in observing ceremonies, because they submit to their rulers, or the tradition of the ancients? Oh that they knew the day of their visitation! The last thing I shall notice is—

8. The fear of man and the rod of discipline. The inspired Solomon tells us, that "the fear of man bringeth a snare; but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe." These two things are contrasted, and they cannot consist together. No one can put his trust in the Lord aright but as he is delivered from the fear of man. This fear of the rod of discipline has always been a powerful snare to hold fast the sons of ignorance and superstition in every age. When religion is first made to consist in external rites, it is easy to infer how terrible must be the threat of excommunication; whereby the poor offender is rendered absolutely incapable of performing religious obedience according to this estimate, and consequently of happiness. Odious names, anathemas, exclusion from the communion of the body, and from all temporal favours,—to be treated as excommunicated persons,—to be stripped of all religion, (according to the principles of their education,) and to be deprived of all common civility,—all this forms a temptation of no small power. But the fear of the Lord would break the snare, and bid defiance to the fear of man, and the puny arm of human authority, when unsupported by the will of God. "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?"* "Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us. Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them

* Isa. ii. 22.

to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken. Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him. Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, who dwelleth in mount Zion."*

Thus I have attempted to shew the proper nature of Christian benevolence, as exemplified by the temper and character of an individual,—the peculiar objects to which it was directed as mentioned in the text,—and the numerous powerful obstacles which it had to oppose. But before we enter on a specific application of the principle recommended, in its practical exercise towards the Jews, it may be proper to anticipate one objection—What was the result of all this affection and labour? If a man divinely inspired, and furnished with miraculous powers, failed to convince the Jews, what hope is there left for us? I reply, that St Paul did not expect the conversion of all the Jews in his day; that nevertheless the number of converts from among them was not small, though his greatest harvest was among the Gentiles; that his success, at the lowest estimation, was an ample counterbalance to all his toils; that the Divine command, and a rational probability of success, are a sufficient basis of exertion; that the whole process of moral government, and the legitimate use of means, justify our acting on probabilities; and, finally, that ultimate success is not the proper standard of Divine approbation. "Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God. And now, saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength."† If we have not the privilege of erecting a magnificent temple, let it be our em-

* Isa. viii. 10–18. † Isa. xlix. 4, 5.

ployment and our pleasure to gather materials for it. If we attain not to the honour destined for Solomon, let us aim at the piety of David. Let us now advert to—

IV. The *manner* in which the benevolence recommended ought to be directed and exercised in present circumstances. And—

1. Let your benevolence be exercised in a manner consistent with liberty. This, I know, is your avowed principle, and on this principle you have acted. But it is proper that others also should know it. Liberty, in matters of conscience, is the unalienable right of every man. Persecuting benevolence, though invested with the highest authority and power upon earth, is a contradiction in terms. Human compulsion in religious affairs, under whatever pretence, is an abomination in the sight of the Supreme Ruler. On this point, the laws of God and the dictates of nature should be examined with care, and observed with conscientious diligence. The two luminaries, the greater light of revelation, and the smaller light of natural law, though very different, are never contradictory; for the will of God can never oppose itself. Now parents, by Divine constitution, have power over their children until these have a right, in their turn, to act for themselves; nor is there any power on earth that can lawfully hinder a parent from benefiting his child according to the best of his judgment. To God alone he is accountable; and to hinder him or to threaten him in the exercise of his power, is a tyrannical infringement of his unalienable rights. God has never consigned the conscience of one person to be governed by another, nor is it compatible with the rules of His moral government. These principles of liberty you avow, as before observed, and on these principles you have hitherto acted. But superstition has always trampled upon them, and instead of instruction and mild persuasion, has had recourse to threats and compulsive measures.

2. Treat the Jews, on all occasions, as you would wish to be treated, supposing yourselves in their circumstances. This comprehends both benevolence and justice. Keeping this sacred rule in view, you will seek their attention by conciliatory means, by the meekness of wisdom, by an ardent wish for their improvement, ever tempered with candour and justice. When this is the case, the most bigoted partisan will have no ground of complaint, and your good cannot be evil spoken of but at the expense of your

revilers. While acting upon this golden rule, your instruction and discipline will be adapted to their real present wants, and your dependence for success will be placed on the Divine blessing.

3. Let every effort of benevolence be in subservience to their eternal welfare. In some cases, owing to peculiar circumstances, they may need temporal aids; but the greatest need is that of their immortal souls. Let therefore your "doctrine drop as the rain, and distil as the dew" upon their minds. You *know*, that this is life eternal, that they may know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent, as the Saviour of the lost; and among others, the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Let us keep in mind that their souls are as precious as our own; that rites and ceremonies can never save them; that if they are saved at all, it must be by the knowledge of God and our Saviour. We can only use the means, the success is of God. Therefore—

4. With benevolent commiseration let prayer be united. "My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is," says St Paul, "that they might be saved." If He do not save them, they are lost for ever. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." Great things are promised in favour of Israel; yet, "Thus saith the Lord God, I will for this be inquired of to do it for them."* "Then shall they remember their own evil ways, and their doings that were not good, and shall loathe themselves in their own sight for their iniquities."† "Then shall He raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, close up the breaches thereof, and raise up his ruins."‡

5. Let intelligent zeal and vigorous exertion accompany your prayers. I have endeavoured to shew that Christian benevolence is an operative principle. But, like every other principle, it requires continually to be excited and strengthened. In the present imperfect state of our existence we are too apt to lose sight of our best privileges and greatest obligations. "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip."§ "To do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." The tree is known by its fruits. If we are the subjects of Christian benevolence, our hearts will be expanded by it; and it will constrain us to run in the ways of God. It will dispose us

* Ezek. xxxvi. 37. † Ver. 31. ‡ Amos ix. 11. § Heb. ii. 1.

not only to devote ourselves to Him and His cause, but also the talents He has given us. The kindness it inspires ought to be substantial, when suitable objects are presented. If it pervade the whole soul of its possessor, shall it have no influence on his property? Yes, an enlarged heart, expanded affections, will prompt the liberal hand—especially when the salvation of men is concerned.

I have endeavoured to point out to you particular objects of your benevolent exertions, after the example of one whose character you deservedly revere. St Paul, to manifest the purity of his love to souls, devoted his time, his talents, his incessant and unparalleled labours to their salvation. And a man who did this continually to the day of his death would have thought little of silver and gold, if possessed of it, to accomplish his God-like design. But what has St Paul done compared with his Lord and ours? "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich"—rich in grace and glory. He gave Himself, His body and soul, to humiliation, to labours, to poverty, to insult, to excruciating pain, and an ignominious death, for us men, and for our salvation.

"This was compassion like a God,
That when the Saviour knew
The price of pardon was His blood,
His pity ne'er withdrew."

According to the flesh, Jesus was Himself a Jew, and among the Jews He exercised His ministry. And though they ungratefully requited His love, and with the Gentiles effected His death, even this did not prevail to turn aside His compassion from them. For He exclaimed in death, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And, after His resurrection, He gave command to His ministering servants to have a special regard for them:—"Go ye, and preach the gospel to every creature, beginning at Jerusalem;" as if He had said, Be still regardful of the Jews; the aggravation of their crime exposes them to greater danger, and more fearful punishment, and therefore they stand in greater need of your compassionate attention.

When the branches of a noble, and especially of a celebrated family, are reduced to poverty or distress, we feel their state more

forcibly from association and contrast. Compare those princely characters, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Moses and Aaron, David and Solomon, with the present objects presented to your benevolent compassion. "How is the gold become dim, the most fine gold changed!" The descendants of Abraham were once a channel consecrated by Jehovah for conveying to man the richest blessings of which he is capable. To them were committed the oracles of God; they were His witnesses for many ages against idolatry, by which surrounding nations were degraded and miserably enslaved; their land was the valley of vision, where prophets, divinely inspired, lived and preached; and, above all, from them sprung the Prince of peace and glory. Now contemplate the pitiable contrast. I need not describe it, for in the metropolis you have ocular proofs of it every day; and, be assured, that the exterior in the street and in the synagogue is but a too faithful representation of what lies behind the scene.

Blessed be God, there are a few happy exceptions; a few have "escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust;" a few have seen the purity of the gospel and the glories of Emmanuel, and have devoted themselves and their offspring to Him by a sacred rite. And should we not view these as the first-fruits of a future harvest? Should not reapers be sought, and granaries provided? You have, I find, greater accommodations in view; liberal minds devise liberal things. But in order to effect such designs, pecuniary aids are needful. In the present state of society, the ignorant cannot be effectually instructed without liberal assistance, any more than the naked be clothed, the hungry fed, or the sick relieved. Benevolent institutions which regard the body only are numerous; but the institution under present consideration embraces the welfare of body and soul, and, owing to very peculiar circumstances, has for its objects the comforts of this life and the glories of eternity. You are now requested to give substantial proofs of your "Christian benevolence" in favour of these objects; and I feel confident, from your known liberality, that this appeal will not be made in vain.

SERMON IX.

THE EVIL AND DANGER OF ENVY.

GENESIS xxxvii. 11.

"And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying."

"Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?"* Ah! no. It is a vice deeply seated in the corrupted heart of man; and on many occasions appears to spring up as a root of bitterness, poisonous in itself, and polluting everything within its reach.

We naturally expect that it should be operative in those who are thoroughly depraved, of whom it may be said that "every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts is only evil continually." But how affecting the thought that virtuous characters are occasionally infected by it. Yet we find Rachel envying Leah, Joshua envying Eldad and Medad, David envying the prosperity of the wicked; and here we have ten brothers, from whom better dispositions might have been expected, as brought up under the eye of an exemplary father, awfully subject to its influence:—"And his brethren envied him."

This odious vice has been seldom discussed in a sermon, but it affords useful instruction and advice. Let us therefore, on the present occasion, consider its general character,—the object and occasion of the present instance of it,—together with its evil nature and dangerous tendency; from which may be deduced suitable reflections and exhortations. Let us consider—

I. The general character of envy. An exact delineation of it would not a little conduce to a detestation of its nature, and a

* James iv. 5.

dread of its effects. Perhaps the particulars I am going to mention may be regarded as, at least, a likeness in miniature. It is a painful feeling of the mind, arising from an excess of self-love, operating in the form of hatred towards the reputed superiority of another.

1. It is a painful feeling of the mind. The soul not merely receives no pleasure in contemplating its object, but is painfully disquieted, and corroded with anguish. Whatever temporary respite it may experience, whatever enjoyment it may derive from other objects of thought, no sooner does its own proper object present itself, than the former feeling occurs, and often with tenfold force. With this, as with a spectre, the mind is harassed, and the restless anxiety is sometimes impressed in terrible characters on the countenance.

2. It arises from an excess of self-love. Selfishness is both the parent and the nurse of envy. Were not this hateful idol set up as the standard of excellence, envy could have no nourishment, no existence. Were the subject of it really persuaded, were he cordially to admit, that another is better than himself, its stormy conflicts would soon be succeeded by tranquil benevolence and peaceful humility. But, alas! the envious are too selfish to feel the joys of humility, or to taste the feast of benevolence.

3. Envy operates in the form of hatred towards the reputed superiority of another. It pays a special regard to opinion and esteem; and when an envious person apprehends that an estimate is formed unfavourable to himself, in comparison with another, his displeasure is roused to hatred—hatred, if not to the person, at least to his supposed qualities. The peculiar object of envy, it should be remarked, is not mere superiority, but that kind of it which comes in immediate competition with self, or what the envious man imagines to be claimable by himself, and suitable to his own case and circumstances. The superiority to which I allude is of different kinds, but may be comprised under three words—excellence, success, and enjoyment. When an envious person turns his eye on another who is respected or esteemed for any excellence, whether of mind or body, as eclipsing or any way rivalling his own, and especially that in which he apprehends an injurious competition, his mind is disturbed and grieved. A competition, indeed, is always included. Strength does not envy beauty; nor does beauty envy strength. The envious eye always regards that peculiar kind of excellence where a comparison can

be instituted, and where rivalry is feared. And when *success* is the object contemplated, as in any business or undertaking, envy is not excited, at least to any height, except when viewed in the light of competition. A man engaged in secular business can see without discomposure the success of one who is employed in scientific researches or useful inventions. But when another eclipses him in his peculiar occupation, the hateful passion is awakened at once. This is also the case where the envied object has a superiority of enjoyment. Instantly he concludes, whether that enjoyment be procured by the favour of others or by personal exertions, that the possessor has no better claim to it than himself, and indulges, in consequence, in this mental persecution against him. It may be remarked further, that the superiority against which the attacks of envy are directed is that which the person in whom it resides has little or no hope of excelling, or even equalling. Emulation encourages the hope of rising to the same eminence, but envy disheartens and corrodes, and, as Solomon expresses it, is "the rottenness of the bones."* All sinful passions are detestable, but which of them "can stand before envy?" We shall now consider—

II. The object and occasion of that instance of it which is mentioned in the text:—"And his brethren envied him." Joseph was the object, and what principally occasioned and excited his brethren against him were, his faithful testimony against their conduct, the partial fondness of his father, and those indications of his future greatness in which he was prefigured as superior to themselves. Joseph, interesting from his youth, and wise beyond his years, lovely in person, and amiable in temper, seems peculiarly formed to attract and conciliate. But his endowments cannot shield him from envy. Nay, they constitute its very appetite and food. They are the fuel of the consuming flame. In particular—

1. What greatly occasioned and inflamed this evil passion was his faithful testimony against their improper conduct. "Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren, ... and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report."† That is, he related to his father what he saw criminal, or in some respect blameworthy, in their conduct. Surely this, so far from being censurable, was a laudable discharge of incumbent duty.

* Prov. xiv. 30. † Chap. xxxvii. 2.

One would suppose that no eye but the envious could view his conduct in any other light. It is indeed but too common for children, servants, and other associates, under some indistinct notion of honour, to conceal and screen the acts of mischief or impropriety which pass under their view. But is a parent or master, then, to be kept in ignorance of misconduct and malpractices, which are injurious to himself, and criminal in those under his care? Concealment in such cases is the direct road to anarchy and ruin; and the pretended faithfulness of those who connive is nothing better than a participation in the evil, and a hatred of its reform.

2. What still more excited the envy of these young men against their brother was the manifested partiality of his father towards him. Partial to him he might be, and that innocently, nay commendably, on account of his virtues; but the imprudence which made it prominent must be condemned. "Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours,"* or pieces. Here the partiality discovered itself in the form of invidious distinction. But however blamable Jacob might be in his not exercising suitable care and caution, this was no exculpation of the envious disposition of which it was the occasion.

3. But what raised their envy to its greatest height was Joseph's prefigured future greatness and superiority. "And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren; and they hated him yet the more. And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed. For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf. And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? and they hated him yet the more for his dreams and for his words. And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more, and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him," not for dreaming, but for openly divulging his dreams, "and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed

* Chap. xxxvii. 3.

come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying." *

Here we remark, that Joseph appears to have been under the influence of simple honesty, rather than of policy, in relating these dreams. They had made a strong impression on his mind, but probably he had not attempted to hazard an interpretation. His envious brethren, however, were more quick-sighted, and said to him, "Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? and they hated him yet the more for his dreams and for his words." His other dream, of the sun, moon, and stars, he told his father also. But Jacob's conduct on the occasion, compared with that of his sons, deserves notice. He, too, made the application, but neither *hated* nor *envied* Joseph. Instead of harbouring these evil passions, he first rebuked him, "What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?" The "rebuke" is only a gentle check, lest pride or presumption should be encouraged by the dreamer, or because he had discovered too little caution on so delicate a subject. It is manifest that the father's conduct is contrasted with those of the sons. For he "*observed* the saying;" that is, instead of envying, he indulged a thoughtful, considerate, and pious meditation. As if he had reflected, "Well, it is possible that these dreams are from the Lord, and that Joseph in some way or other is to have a superiority over us; it is possible that we may be brought to humiliating circumstances, and thus be constrained to make obeisance to him. If, indeed, the Lord's hand is in the matter, I submit to Him, and leave myself and all my concerns to His disposal." But, on the contrary, "his brethren envied him." This leads us to consider—

III. The evil and danger of envy. We can only attempt, however, to notice a few prominent particulars. Let us contemplate it, then, as betraying a deplorable want of charity and good-will,—as manifesting a dissatisfaction with the appointments of Providence,—as depriving those who are subject to it of peace and tranquillity,—as stimulating to hatred and malice, suggesting contrivances against reputation and character, and sometimes even against life.

1. It betrays a deplorable want of charity and good-will.

* Chap xxxvii. 5–11.

"Charity envieth not." A soul without charity, benevolence, or love to God and man, is a prey on which all the evil passions feed. As love is the fulfilling of the law, so the want of it is the most radical vice; and of all the ramifications of vice, envy is the most odious and pestiferous. So far as this unhallowed passion prevails charity, the most amiable and beneficent, is injured and suppressed.

2. It indicates a dissatisfaction with the appointments of Providence. What! has not the all-wise God a right to bestow His favours on whom He pleases, to elevate one more than another, to make this man more wise and prudent, more honourable, more powerful, more excellent than his neighbour, more successful in his pursuits, and more happy in his enjoyments, both as to religion and his worldly concerns? No, says Envy; that allotment is partial and unjust; I can never submit to be a second to my rival. Thus envy directs its poisoned shaft not only against the immediate object of its exercise, but ultimately against God.

3. The vicious temper which I am exposing deprives those who are under its influence of peace and tranquillity. The envious are their own tormentors. Spider-like, they extract poison from the best things, and treasure it up in their breasts, whence it diffuses itself through their whole system, and corrodes their very vitals. In vain you present to them the most amiable and praiseworthy examples, for these only excite the evil, and increase the malady. The daily beauty which adorns another's life makes their own imperfections more prominent; and should they enjoy a momentary repose, the loveliest objects will soon renew the conflict within, agitating and disturbing their souls. Besides—

4. It stimulates to hatred, malice, and revenge against its innocent object. This was the terrible effect of envy in the narrative before us. "And Joseph went after his brethren," in obedience to his father's command, "and found them in Dothan. And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him." * Here the mere sight of the envied object, though innocently engaged in an act of filial duty, excites hatred afresh, even to murderous revenge. To support each other in their malicious conspiracy, "they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh," this master of dreams. "Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit." On this occasion, it naturally occurred to them that the bloody

* Ver. 17, 18.

deed might be discovered. Envy is not very scrupulous; that which disdains the truth of things will seldom hesitate about the truth of words. "We will say," they add, "Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams."

This was the general sentiment, but there was one honourable exception among these brethren:—"Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him. And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again." Well has it been for many an innocent victim, when in a court, in a council, in a senate, or in a family, there has been a Reuben to interpose. Happy was it for Joseph that he had one brother capable of relenting, and of shedding over him a sympathetic tear!

The subject on which we have been meditating affords some useful reflections and exhortations. We *reflect*—

How amiable is benevolence! This "suffereth long, and is kind; envieth not; vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth."* This pleasing disposition shewed itself in Jacob:—"His father observed the saying." And its influence on the mind of Reuben, as a means under the direction of Divine wisdom, saved the life of Joseph, and in him the lives of thousands.

How exalted is the morality of the gospel! Who has ever discovered a trace of envy in the character of Jesus, who has given us an example that we should follow His steps? And, amidst infirmities incident to all merely human characters, how wonderfully free from this vice were His apostles and disciples! When shall we see such characters among the partisans of infidelity?

How delightful the society of heaven! In that blissful state profound humility reigns, love of the purest kind fills every breast, and envy, the inmate of hell, has no place, no access. In that happy region love to God, love to Christ, love to holiness, love to saints, and love to angels, excludes every envious look and envious inclination; while the observed excellences of others increase the bliss.

* 1 Cor. xiii. 4-6.

On the subject discussed a few *exhortations* may be founded :—

Has Providence favoured you with any superiority or distinction? Seek wisdom and prudence. While harmless as doves, be wise as serpents. Have you strength, beauty, or wit? Be thankful to the Giver, and pervert them not to purposes of ostentation. Have you riches or success? Cultivate humility and modesty. Are you distinguished from others around you by providence or grace? Aim not at being too conspicuous; retire into the shade, and candidly allow to others all the merit to which they are entitled.

Do any of you feel the stings of envy? Consider how detestable the temper, how it counteracts itself, how displeasing to God, how contrary to the character of Jesus and the spirit of His religion, how infallibly it robs its deluded subject of peace and tranquillity, disqualifies for communion with God, and for the society of heaven.

Would you keep free from this execrable and self-tormenting passion? Avoid excessive self-love, habituate yourself to contemplate supreme excellence with delight, and remember that when you have well learnt the Christian lesson of loving your enemies, the envy which has a brother or a neighbour for its object will be effectually excluded from your breast. Seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit of God,—"the Spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind,"—and this unhallowed flame shall not come nigh you.

Do you behold the operation of this evil temper in others? Imitate the conduct of Reuben. Endeavour to appease the storm, or, at least, mitigate its fury. His kind interference produced some good effect; for Judah is first softened, and by his means the others :—"And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content." * As long as we see any prospect of success, let us not be unconcerned or supinely negligent, but entertain a hope that we may be of some use to others in moderating their passions. And more especially should this be our endeavour when any of our brethren suffer without cause. Who can calculate what good effects may follow a seasonable interference? Little did Reuben or Judah think what would be the glorious result of sparing the life of their brother, and that they, together with all their family, would one

* Gen. xxxvii. 26, 27.

day reap the fruit of their friendly counsel. "Let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due time we shall reap, if we faint not." "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace."*

* James iii. 13–18.

SERMON X.

THE WILES OF SEDUCERS.

PROVERBS i. 17.

"Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird."

To enumerate all the different ways in which this proverbial saying has been explained by translators and interpreters would be an unprofitable occupation of your time, and frustrate the object I have in view. Without recounting, and then rejecting the renderings, therefore, which appear less probable, let us abide by our own received version, and see whether it does not afford us instruction of great importance.

This, you observe, is one of the proverbs of Solomon, and is found incorporated in a discourse which may be termed a dissuasive against being seduced to evil, and in which the wiles of seducers are exposed. In no respects, perhaps, was its distinguished author more remarkable than in the wisdom of his maxims, and the peacefulness of his reign. Hence his labours to promote instruction and virtue among the people he governed, as the chief means to prevent calamities, to suppress discord and confusion, thefts and rapine, bloodshed and war. This wise and practical preacher begins his address thus:—"My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not."* And, after exposing their schemes of iniquity, he adds:—"My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their paths."† They who seduce others to sin seem to act the part of cunning fowlers; but at last they are taken in their own net, as well as those whom they succeed in tempting. For, eventually, "they lay wait for their own blood; they lurk privily for their own lives."‡

* Ver. 10. † Ver. 15. ‡ Ver. 18.

In order that we may enter into the spirit of our text, it is necessary for us to have a clear idea of the natural scene on which the proverb is founded; to this, therefore, we shall attend, in the first place: and then we may deduce the instruction it affords: from the subject will arise, finally, some reflections and addresses.

I. In describing the natural scene to which the proverb alludes, a few words will be sufficient. As the custom here intended is not familiar to us, we should transport ourselves in thought to other times and countries. We may then behold a fowler or decoy-man, whose business it is to catch birds, either for pleasure or for gain. We see him furnished with baits adapted to the nature of the birds, either living ones of the same kind, tamed and trained for that purpose, or else that sort of food which is most palatable to his destined prey. We observe a net laid with great caution, lest the birds should be alarmed with a sight of it. For the fowler's art consists in choosing a favourable situation, in preparing suitable baits, and in concealing the net, in which the bird is caught, and by the sight of which it would be alarmed. It is entangled because unsuspicious of the snare:—"For surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird!"

II. Let us now advert to the design of the proverb, or the instruction intended to be conveyed by it. And we are taught—

1. That those who draw others from the right way to that which is wrong, like the fowler, keep the danger out of sight. By the "right way," I mean the way of innocence, of modesty, and of truth; the way of chastity, temperance and sobriety; the way of obedience, of diligence, and of honesty; the way of wisdom, prudence, and piety. The right way is that in which the well-instructed ought to go, that which is approved of God, profitable to man, and conducive to personal happiness. But this happiness is not to be estimated by a momentary gratification. That is true happiness which is adapted to our superior nature, and of unfailing durability. It is from this way that the wicked, the foolish, and the giddy, would draw the young and the unwary. And the way into which they would entice them is that of disregard to God and religion, the way of disobedience to the best laws, the way of licentious thinking and acting, the way of dishonesty and falsehood, of sensuality and intemperance. It is the way of

idleness and sloth, of profane swearing, Sabbath-breaking, impatience of restraint, and contempt of God's word and commandments; the way of envy and hatred, of railing and revenge; the way that leads to destruction and ruin.

But who are the tempters? They are the most worthless of their species, who, while they put on an air of cleverness, of pleasure, and of promise, in reality are the most unwise and wretched; who, while they promise liberty, are the servants of corruption; who are slaves of the worst kind, and procure for themselves the worst of wages—death. As those who turn many unto righteousness shall "shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father," so those who offend, and lay snares for the innocent, multiply misery for themselves. "It were better for such an one that a millstone were tied about his neck, and he were cast into the midst of the sea."

Few, indeed, openly avow these intentions, nay, in most instances, perhaps, the tempter to iniquity has no other aim but that of self-gratification, and an increase of it by mutual participation and countenance. They sometimes foolishly suppose that numbers lessen the odium; but all the while they studiously conceal from others the evil nature, the disgraceful and ruinous consequences of vice, to which also they are themselves miserably blind. By leaving "the paths of uprightness," they "walk in the ways of darkness."* Again, we are taught—

2. That tempters to evil, while they conceal the danger, render the allurement as obvious and prominent as possible. So intent are they upon the bait, that the net of danger is not seen by themselves, much less by those whom they enslave. Here I shall explain my meaning, and thereby the design of the proverb, a little more particularly.

Are any tempted to dishonesty? The bait is, increased means of selfish indulgence and enjoyment. Were you possessed of what you are now destitute, says the tempter, your wants would be removed, and your means of happiness enlarged. Wealth commands a thousand pleasures; and, therefore, if you cannot obtain it in one way, why should you scruple to secure it by another?

Are any tempted to intemperance and sensuality? The bait is a present pleasure. Why should we regard the future, of which we know so little? What enemy can lurk in this viand or that

* Prov. ii. 13.

wine-cup? What are our passions and appetites given us for, if they are perpetually to be kept in check? How unreasonable and cruel a doctrine is that of self-denial! Let us live, then, while we live; let us be sure of *some* happiness. If there be a God, and a future state, He cannot be so cruel as to deny us present pleasure, or at least His mercy will overlook our weakness.

Are any tempted to bloody deeds? The plausible allurement is honour. Must you, says the tempter, be insulted with impunity? Your reputation demands revenge, and, without ample concession, blood should be its price. The honour of your character, the honour of your comrades, the honour of your country, fully justifies the use of the dreadful weapon.—Listen to the martial music, look at the ample bounty, view the path to victory, and the renown with which you are to be covered! How mean and dastardly, says the tempter, must be that soul which does not burn for distinction in a cause so prodigal of glory? "Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, ... let us swallow them up alive as the grave; and whole, as those that go down into the pit." Ah! what multitudes are caught by this lure, and led as sheep to the slaughter; while the dissipation, the privations, the toils, the hazards, the wounds, the groans, and the horrible carnage, are kept out of sight! The bait how prominent, the net how concealed! For after all what but sophistry can pretend to separate wars and fightings, duels and battles, private and public violence, as if the one were wrong, but the other praiseworthy?

> "War is a game, which, were their subjects wise,
> Kings would not play at."

"Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird." Again, we learn—

3. That those who suffer themselves to be tempted and overcome by the wiles of the wicked, will be at length entangled as in a net. How often is dishonesty detected and covered with disgrace! How often are the fruits of lust and intemperance brought to light and loaded with scorn! And how often does promised honour prove an empty bubble! Yes, they who are bold in sin, and tempt others to be like themselves, are sure to be entangled in the net of perplexity, and, without unfeigned repentance, to be the victims of endless woe.

They are sure to be disquieted and perplexed by conscience. It

haunts them like an evil spirit; they seek rest, but find none. Like the death-step of the bloodhound, it tracks them day and night. They try to shut the eye of the mind, and to persuade themselves that there is no danger; but the lightning will sometimes flash, the thunder roar, the fire burst from its prison, the soul shake from its inmost recesses. Miserable comforters are their companions in wickedness, for they have no consolation to impart; and their very antidotes are poisons.

By every act of unlawful compliance, too, the sinner is entangled in evil habits. The oftener a crime is repeated, whether by open transgression or secret indulgence, the more perplexing becomes the entanglement, the more difficult the extrication, the more debasing the slavery. Besides, every human mind, while guilt and evil habits continue unremoved, will be caught in the toils of hell. Hell! says the infidel; I see only one world, let the credulous believe in another. Thou fool! search thy own heart; it is nigh unto thee, even in thy own breast: an unseen poison rankles in thy veins, and undermines thy life. "Be sure thy sins will find thee out!"

III. This subject affords occasion for a few reflections.

1. What a contrast between the agents of iniquity and the faithful servants of Christ! How different their character and conduct, how opposite the spirit by which they are actuated! The moving power in the one is detestable selfishness, exciting pride and envy, lust and coveteousness, affecting a pretended liberty that ends in slavery, and pleasure that ends in pain. The moving power in the other is benevolence, manifesting itself by faithfulness, compassion, and kindness, the tendency of which is purity and peace, domestic harmony and comfort, social happiness, true freedom, and a blessed immortality. The one labours to draw the young and incautious from the path of wisdom and virtue, from God and His prescribed ways, from Christ and His gospel, to the paths of vice and ruin; the other consults their best and lasting interest, and would fain bring them to that Physician who alone can heal their maladies, who can give them peace and rest in their souls, whose grace is sufficient, and whose salvation is everlasting.

2. How different the net of which we have been speaking from that of the gospel! The former drags the thoughtless and foolish to selfishness, criminality, and guilt; to darkness, perplexity, and slavery. It entangles those who are decoyed into it in self-

reproach, disesteem, and horrible despair. But the gospel gently draws men from selfishness to benevolence, from darkness to light, from guilt to peace of conscience, from slavery to liberty, the glorious liberty of the sons of God, and from the brink of despair to repentance, holiness, and heaven. By this, the poor and wretched are brought to a large and wealthy place; by this, the sons and daughters of dissipation are invited to the company of the virtuous, and to fellowship with God.

3. How different the divinely-appointed mode of reforming men, compared with the arts of seduction! In the latter, all is a series of sophistry and folly. Not a single topic of persuasion can stand the test of Scripture, of sound reason, or of conscience. All is conducted by low cunning, and a concealment of real consequences. But what is the mode which we are authorised to use? We confidently appeal to the dictates of conscience, to the principles of sound reason, and the revealed wisdom of God. We have no artifice, no concealment, no flattery, but place all before you, as in the light of open day. We fear no examination, and shrink from no consequences.

IV. From this subject I am naturally led to address those who tempt to evil,—the young who have been hitherto preserved,—those who have been seduced and entangled,—and those who enjoy the liberty of the gospel.

1. I address those who tempt to evil. It may be you are not conscious of adopting any regular plan of ensnaring and seducing others. Perhaps you have proceeded only on the impulse of the moment, freely and unceremoniously communicated the feelings of your heart, or indulged the luxuriance of a playful imagination. You probably despise a settled plan of doing anything, confiding in your flow of spirits, or the promptness of your supposed wit. But among all your fine and witty thoughts, has this one ever occurred to you, that it is impossible for you to be cordially esteemed by any being in the universe? For by whom can you expect to be esteemed? Not by pure spirits, not by angels, not by God, who is holiness itself. Not by the wicked, for they are as incapable of bestowing as you of receiving the reward of virtue. Not by yourselves, for conscience keeps your mind dissatisfied with itself, perpetually inflicting the noiseless lash, and lifting the unseen scourge.

2. I address the young who have been hitherto preserved from the artifices of the wicked. Take heed what company you keep; by this very generally your character may be known. If you suppose yourselves wiser and better than your loose associates, remember that "a companion of fools shall be destroyed." It is not possible that you can hear their profane, sceptical, and foolish talk, and not be injured by it. "Their words do eat as doth a canker." Avoid pernicious books, the reading of which operates like slow poison; and whose authors, the retailers of luscious impiety, are the pests of mankind, the despicable dregs of wit and genius. To be entangled in this "net" argues a total absence of true genius, of solid reason, of generous sentiment. The writers of whom I am speaking, with all their wit and meretricious ornament, were themselves "the servants of corruption," the very slaves of vice. Some of them affect to despise the Bible; but, as you value your souls, beware of imitating their example. Here you have the maxims of real wisdom, "the words of truth and soberness," the precepts of righteousness, and the doctrine of salvation. If you would contemplate an exalted and truly wonderful character, look to Christ; a character which infidels are constrained to admire, while they stand at an immense distance from its excellency, and while they dare not attempt an imitation of it. Distrust your own strength in wisdom, and pray to the all-wise God to assist you.

3. I address those who have been seduced and entangled, but are not wholly in the power of the evil net. Have you felt the galling chains? Have you tasted the wormwood of remorse? And have you been, in some happy degree, extricated from these odious and painful toils? Now, what are your purposes? Will you still rush upon the bait, as if there were no danger? Do you already forget that "the way of transgressors is hard?" Do you again begin to question that "the wages of sin is death?" Oh, "seek the Lord while He may be found, and call upon Him while He is near." And remember that "he who, being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

4. Lastly, I address those who, through the riches of Divine grace, enjoy the liberty of the gospel. You have been made "wise unto salvation." You were, by depraved nature, "the children of wrath, even as others." As long as you followed "the thoughts and devices of your own hearts," and your foolish imaginations, which

were "only evil continually," you had no real enjoyment. For "what fruit had you then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?" You had grief of heart, disquietude of mind, horror of conscience, and "a fearful looking for of judgment, which shall devour the adversary." By what means have you been delivered from this miserable bondage? You will readily acknowledge that it was grace, unmerited and sovereign grace, which made you sensible of your condition, and gently drew your souls, in the use of means, to the Lord Jesus Christ. Believing in Him, trusting in His atonement, and confiding in His finished righteousness, you found your guilt removed, peace with God, a holy joy, a placid and quiet rest, and finally spiritual vigour to engage in all Christian obedience. Be not again entangled with the yoke of bondage; but, "as ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him."

SERMON XI.

THE VALUE OF REVEALED RELIGION.

GENESIS i. 1.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

NOTHING is of so much importance to men as the knowledge of God. Compared with Him, all other objects are but shadows. For as a shadow has no subsistence but as connected with a substantial body, so neither have created objects without God, the only absolute Being, self-existent and independent. He is the eternal and perpetual support of the universe, and of all its parts. As without Him it could have had no existence, so the continuance of the same creating energy is the only basis on which it rests.

Now the value of knowledge, or the importance of knowing any object, must depend on the value of the thing known, and its relation to our wants. What knowledge, then, can be comparable to that which has "the only true God," the Being of beings, for its object, who possesses all possible good, and whose goodness is communicative. He is good in a manner that excludes all competition. "There is none good," in an absolute sense, "but one, that is, God." Nay, He is essential goodness itself, as He is also wisdom and power. And so related are we to Him, so dependent upon Him, that, without a participation of His goodness and beneficence, it is not possible for us to be finally happy; or even in the present state to have a real enjoyment of ourselves.

But how shall erring and benighted creatures attain to this excellent knowledge? What is the light of nature, in its highest improvements, but as that of the moon, and, in its lowest degree, that of the glow-worm, amidst the shades and gloom of night. Indeed, were our faculties employed to the best advan-

tage, some useful instruction might be collected from the contemplation of our own frames, and the small portion of the universe exposed to our notice. These objects, as so many mirrors, might reflect some rays of the invisible power and perfections of God. "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they [who deny an eternal power and Godhead] are without excuse." *

Let it be recollected, however, that so much of the means of knowledge as renders men inexcusable is not to be confounded with that degree which actually profits them, so as to secure their happiness. It is, alas! an awful fact that "darkness hath covered the earth, and gross darkness the people." All are immersed in profound ignorance of the chief good, and the mode of obtaining it. How have the greatest geniuses of antiquity, and the most civilised nations of the earth, both ancient and modern, on whom the sun of revealed religion has not risen, lost themselves in the darkness of superstition and idolatry! "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and to four-footed beasts, and creeping things." †

My present design is to shew the importance of Divine revelation, or the value of revealed religion, and to derive from the subject suitable instruction. With this point in view, let us now inquire, first, what the *book of nature* teaches respecting God and religion; and, secondly, how *Divine revelation* supplies the defect.

I. What the book of nature teaches respecting God and religion. It teaches then—

1. That there is a stupendous universe, full of grandeur and regularity. In proof of this we need only open our eyes. He must be a brute in human form who is not struck with the amazing extent, the wonderful order, and general beauty of the world. It is not necessary to be an astronomer to admire the heavens, or to be a navigator to feel the sensations of sublimity from a survey of the expanded and moving ocean. How wonderful the variety of animal and vegetable forms, and yet how regular the continuation of their species!

2. This amazing structure could not produce and form itself.

* Rom. i. 20. † Rom. i. 22, 23.

This supposition is too preposterous to be admitted by any reflecting mind. Those ancient sages who knew little or nothing of the First Cause, did not, and could not imagine that the world formed, or any way produced itself. It was one of their most universal maxims, that from nothing, nothing can proceed. For anything to produce itself, is the same as for it to proceed from nothing; at which reason, from the lowest to the highest state of its exercise, must revolt. Again nature teaches—

3. That "the heaven and the earth" are not the production of anything visible. Who can point out any visible being superior to man? But while this is universally allowed, the acknowledgment is not less universal, that man has had no part in forming the stupendous orbs that roll around him. On the contrary, he knows that he has no control over them, but is rather, to a very humbling degree, subject to their influence. Besides, nature teaches—

4. That "the heaven and the earth" are not self-existent. This, I acknowledge, was controverted among the ancient philosophers; for some,—firmly established in this truth, that a self-creation, or nothing producing something, is an absurdity, while, at the same time, they were ignorant of an uncaused, self-existing spirit,—inferred that the universe itself is self-existent. But they ought to have reflected, that the universe is composed of parts, which are continually changing; which argues imperfection, instability, and dependence on something else. Destitute, however, of the light of revelation, where this truth shines with meridian lustre, out of two absurdities they preferred the least. Rather than admit that the world gave being to itself, they fancied it never began to be. But though the former is the most absurd of the two, the latter is sufficiently so, as before shewn. Therefore, as a plain inference—

5. There must be a First Cause, invisible and eternal. This, I say, the book of nature teaches, by fair and easy consequence. Everything subjected to our senses is changeable, corruptible, and dependent; neither a part nor the whole has the character of absolute perfection, and therefore cannot be either independent or eternal. Moreover from the book of nature we may collect—

6. That there are, in the whole and in the parts, marks of design, which refer us to some original wisdom, power, and goodness. Marks of design, when duly weighed, afford an irresistible convic-

tion that they must have had a designer. A garden or a farm bespeaks a cultivator; a house or a ship, a builder; a microscope or a watch refers us irresistibly to skill and contrivance. How, then, is it conceivable that the world itself, the standard and perfection at which all the imitative arts aim, should be without a wise, powerful, and beneficent contriver?

These are the highest lessons, I conceive, which the book of nature, "the heaven and the earth," can teach men, even when they are most disposed to learn. But how far do these lessons fall short of our necessities! How imperfect the instruction we derive concerning the Eternal Cause, that blessed Being from whom we spring, and in whom we exist! Without a Divine revelation, how defective must be the knowledge of ourselves! We know that our nature is imperfect, that we have an accusing conscience, that we need forgiveness, and that to obtain this all human help is vain. But beyond this all is dark and uncertain. Hence the importance of a Divine revelation, the inestimable value of revealed religion. And hence also the other inquiry proposed—

II. How Divine revelation supplies the defect of that knowledge which the book of nature affords. Under this head of discourse, the discussion will relate, in the first instance, to the doctrine which is more *expressly taught* in the words of our text; and, in the second instance, to what they *imply.*

1. Here we are taught that "the heaven and the earth" had a *beginning,* not in a vague and general notion, but in a fixed and determinate sense,—a beginning which is the standard of all true history and chronology,—a beginning from whence all seasons, all revolutions, and time itself, must be reckoned, — a beginning without the knowledge of which ancient history is but dark and fabulous, and remote chronology is nothing better than a series of fanciful conjectures.

2. Here we learn that this beginning was by creation. "In the beginning God *created* the heaven and the earth." Creation, in the revealed Scriptures, is taken principally in two senses, according to the connexion and the nature of the subject. Sometimes it denotes the orderly formation of what was before in an unformed state. This is applicable to the production, for instance, of animals and vegetables out of an unformed mass of primordial materials. But, in the more strict sense of creation, the term is

applicable to the production of what was not before, even in substance. And in this sense, "God created, in the beginning, the heaven and the earth." He then not only gave them a specific form, but also their general existence.

3. We are here informed that this creation was produced and formed by *one* Being, in contradistinction to the fabulous conjectures of those among the ancients who feigned a plurality of creating agents. It is the united testimony of sound reason and of revelation, that "the Lord our God is one Lord," one Being, one eternal and infinitely perfect essence. But if reason dictates the unity of the first creating cause, it may be asked, whence came this notion (and it had a very extensive spread) that the world was created by a plurality? It sometimes happens that coruscations of essential truths shine through the darkness of tradition, and even of idolatry. For though it be an incontrovertible truth that the Creator is *one* Being, yet reason must allow, that as His essence is infinitely different from that of every other being, so His *mode* of existence *may* be, for ought we know, inconceivably different from that of any other.

Moses, who was a strenuous asserter of the unity of the Divine nature, in opposition to all idolatrous notions of the Deity, expressly declares, that "in the beginning ELOHIM created the heaven and the earth;" from which we may infer as highly probable, that the errors of heresy and false philosophy consisted in ignorant distortion of some great truth, and that Moses was directed to employ a plural term, as expressive of some interesting and most important distinction in the modal existence of the one true God. If there be an eternal distinction, or a mode of existence infinitely different from anything found in creatures, against the possibility of which reason has not a word to say; and if this be a truth radically connected with the ultimate happiness of man, as entering essentially into the plan of human redemption, the adoption of this term appears perfectly suitable. But if this be not the case, the origin of the two facts—why Moses employed this term, and how philosophers came to maintain a plurality of creators—must remain a mystery almost as great as the doctrine of a trinity in unity.

4. Here we are further taught that this Creator is GOD, by way of eminence, in opposition to all others. Moses does not say, *a* Deity created the heaven and the earth, without specification or distinction, as if it were of no moment who or what He was. He

means, that the Being who revealed Himself to the patriarchs, who was worshipped by the Hebrews, who derived His existence from no other, who is independent of all other beings, who is all-wise, almighty, omnipresent, self-sufficient, supremely great and good,—that He, and no other, "created the heaven and the earth." And this God is ELOHIM; not a plurality of Beings, but still including some mysterious plurality, to justify, to require, the use of a plural term. And yet, considering the proneness of men to idolatry, and the jealousy of Moses on this point, how improbable that a man of his wisdom and zeal should admit of a name which might give occasion to abuse, if not expressive of an important reality!

These things appear to be clearly included in the text, according to the evident design of the writer, and the terms employed. We now proceed to notice what may be considered as fairly *deducible* from these words. And we may safely infer—

1. That He is the source of all other beings in all worlds. It matters not how many worlds there are, or how variously they are peopled, or of what dignity or number,—"all things were created by Him, and for Him." All the streams of created existences may be traced to this eternal fountain; all the ramifications of worlds and intelligences proceed from, and are supported by, this eternal root. We may further conclude—

2. That all the good in all worlds flows from Him, to the exclusion of all evil. He who gave and upholds our being, gives and upholds all our good qualities. Our faculties, our understanding, will, and affections, our energies and operations are from Him. But evil, of every kind, is only a negative contrast to good; a direct opposition to the work of God. Whatever He communicates is agreeable to His will; but all evil stands opposed to Him; and therefore no evil is agreeable to His will. Evil, indeed, exists among His works, or rather stands related to them, but it is not of His operation. All evil is either the want of absolute perfection, or a want of due perfection. Every creature must have the former, else it would be absolutely or infinitely perfect; but the latter is sin, a want of holiness or moral rectitude, which is a contrariety to the holiness and rectitude of God, and springs from our own defect. We further infer—

3. That all deliverance from evil, or salvation and happiness, comes from God,—as grace, mercy, virtue, holiness, spiritual blessings, and eternal life. He who "created the heaven and the earth,"

creates us anew after our defection and apostasy,—begets in us a new life unto righteousness,—restores His own holy likeness when lost,—makes us willing and obedient, devoted to His will, and active in His service. We had no better claim on Him for these blessings than we had upon Him for our existence; and yet how wonderful the contrivance, and how abundant the provision He has made for our numerous wants! How has He surmounted our demerits by His favour and mercy! what amazing proofs has He given of His benevolence and bounty! and how stupendous the plan of redemption from the effects of justice, from sin and misery! Hence the assumption of human nature, when justice and holiness precluded every other mode of recovery; and hence a way was opened for the communication of Divine influence by which man may be assimilated to God in "righteousness and true holiness," without which there can be no fellowship with Him, or enjoyment of His presence. Truly, "our God is the God of salvation."

III. This subject affords matter of profitable instruction. And—

1. How greatly ought we to commiserate those of the human race who have no Divine revelation! They have access only to the book of nature, and almost universally mistake particular parts of it for nature's God. Conscious that they are formed for religion in general, and destitute of better information, they worship the creature instead of the Creator, and make their choice according to the instruction they receive by education, and corrupt traditions received from their deluded ancestors. Let us, then, do what we can for their improvement, by sending them the Holy Scriptures, and faithful men, "servants of the Most High God," who may shew them the way of salvation.

2. How censurable are those who have the holy revelation of God, and profess to value it, and yet neglect its contents! Are you possessed of this treasure, the Bible, and yet practically feel indifferent to what it contains, and how it may be profitably improved? Reflect upon your conduct,—how ungrateful to God, how injurious to yourselves. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" To have the Holy Scriptures, yet not to enter into their meaning, not to believe with the heart the testimony they bear, not to reduce to practice the moral and evangelical precepts they contain, is as absurd and ungrateful as it

would be to have the remedy in our keeping, and when the disease attacks us to refuse to employ it.

3. How inexcusable are those who are grossly ignorant of revealed truths, though they live in a land of Bibles and instruction! Even the poorest classes of society have abundant opportunities of information in a country where schools are opened for the poor, where religious tracts are disseminated, where Bibles may be procured on the easiest terms, and where the opportunities of hearing them read and explained, are numerous beyond example. When any are surrounded with such advantages, the inference is plain, that their want of knowledge in religion is to be ascribed to criminal indifference. But if the lower classes are inexcusable, what shall we say of those who affect to set up the book of nature in competition with revelation, who assert the sufficiency of reason, to the exclusion of gracious influence, and advocate the deism of infidelity in opposition to faith?

4. How thankful should we be for so rich a treasure as a revelation from God, whereby we may be delivered from the poverty and danger of mere nature; and how solicitous to express that thankfulness in a becoming manner! It should not be a mere verbal thankfulness, nor should our conduct resemble that of the miser who keeps all his treasures to himself. This heavenly treasure is given us, not only for our own use, but to be dispersed abroad as much as possible. We need not fear any bad consequences; it is that kind of property which accumulates in our hands, in proportion as others participate in its enjoyment. It resembles a virtuous affection, which, the more it is exercised, the more it flourishes and is invigorated.

5. How diligent and assiduous should we be to understand the contents of revealed religion, and how solicitous to reduce what we know to practice! When we consider the conduct of those who study "the heavens and the earth,"—with what assiduity, zeal, and perseverance they labour to investigate the laws of nature, the motions of the heavenly bodies, the properties of all terrestrial substances, and how they may be best applied to useful purposes,—well may our indifference and sloth stand reproved, while we have before us a subject incalculably more interesting and important. And, above all, let us reflect that practice is the end of knowledge, and that without the former the latter is useless. "If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them."

CHARGES.

A CHARGE

ADDRESSED TO THE MISSIONARIES, ON OCCASION OF THEIR DESIGNATION TO THE ISLANDS OF THE SOUTH SEA.*

My dear brethren in the Lord, the magnitude of the cause in which you are now engaged, and the solemnities of this day, have not been often equalled; whether we consider your number as missionaries, the liberal countenance of the public, the place of your destination, or the nature of the cause itself. The place of your destination, considered in a religious light, is fallow ground untouched; and if you have the noble ambition of the apostle Paul, "to preach the gospel in distant regions, and not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to your hand,"† you have in prospect an opportunity of having that ambition gratified to its utmost limits. Of the cause itself, who can calculate the consequences? Who can tell but that millions in succeeding ages may be everlastingly benefited by it? The influence of a parent on his posterity, of a magistrate on the circle of his jurisdiction, of a chief governor on his extensive dominions, may, doubtless, be very great; but a minister of God has an influence, good or bad, on the minds of men, still greater, as he officially prepares, or neglects to prepare them for happiness in a never-ending state of existence. And while this is true of every minister of religion, it applies with peculiar emphasis to the missionary.

When, a few days ago, I was solicited to perform this office of

* July 28, 1796. † 2 Cor. x. 16.

addressing you, many difficulties arose in my mind, but none greater than that of entering fully into the real spirit of the occasion. I reflected, that without a heartfelt simplicity of dependence upon God,—without a steady regard for His glory, disregarding the praises or censures of men,—without ardent love to the Lord Jesus Christ and the souls of men,—in a word, without the true spirit of a missionary, there would be a manifest impropriety in my compliance. Conscious weakness, therefore, urged me to decline the momentous task; but deference to the judgment of those whom I greatly respect and love in the truth has disposed me to acquiescence. And now, O Lord God of truth and love, assist both speaker and hearers, for Thy mercy, for Thy Son, for Thy precious promise' sake!

The Holy Scriptures abound with profitable subjects and suitable passages as the ground of such a discourse as this. Many things, addressed to patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and evangelists, are highly applicable to you on this occasion. Were I to address you merely as ministers, no words could be more applicable than our Lord's concluding charge to His disciples:—"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."*

But as you are not all ministers in the strictest sense, nor, indeed, the greater part of you, that subject would be too confined. I shall, therefore, adopt, as a motto to what I have further to say, the words you find in

GENESIS xvii. 1.

"I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect."

Or, "I am God *all-sufficient*," as in the margin and the old translation; "walk before me, and be thou perfect,"—that is, upright, or sincere.

These words, my dear brethren, were addressed to Abraham, to whom God had spoken, some time before, on this wise:—"Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that

* Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. So Abraham departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him."*

Thus you see the call of God, and Abraham's compliance; and *your* call seems not much less clear, though signified in a different way. In each missionary I seem to view this venerable patriarch. In each I view a pilgrim, going forth in the name of the Lord, exercising firm faith in His promise. "By faith Abraham," says the apostle,† "when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went,"—not having a particular knowledge of the country to which he was going. "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." In each missionary I seem to view a father of many faithful. And to each of you are these words now addressed: —"I am God all-sufficient: walk before me, and be thou upright."

Here you have, first, a summary direction by which to proceed in all your future attempts—"Be thou upright, or sincere;" and, secondly, the grand source of your encouragements in the discharge of your arduous work—"I am God all-sufficient." Permit me to attempt an imitation of this Divine pattern, by—

I. Offering to your consideration such directions and remarks as appear to me most important and useful to you as Christian missionaries. As a fundamental general observation, I would have you never to forget that "godliness is profitable for all things," and that nothing can compensate for the want of personal holiness. I solemnly declare I would prefer seeing one of you, both deaf and dumb, embark, if under the influence of religion, than the most eloquent man in Europe if ungodly. Yet this godliness, with its life and power, must be so cultivated as to promote the cause you have espoused. In particular—

1. Maintain a constant holy jealousy over your ends and motives in every step of your missionary walk. If these are indeed good, your only end will not be your own reputation, whether of self-denial and mortification to the world, or your Christian faith and courage, however great,—nor the glory of the British name,

* Chap. xii. 1–4. † Heb. xi. 8–10.

its riches, commerce, arts and sciences, population and power,—nor yet the *temporal* happiness of the heathen, though it were great, and extended to millions yet unborn,—but an end far higher is full in your eye, a motive much more powerful is operative in your soul—their spiritual and everlasting happiness. This you will daily keep in view, and dread the thought of its being eclipsed by anything earthly, remembering there is an end still more glorious than this, to which your hearts should be still more firmly attached—the glory of God our Saviour.

To promote the glory of the God of grace, our world exists; for this the wheels of creation move; to this are directed all the rays of providential wisdom, all the dispensations of religion, all the communications of grace to the soul, with all the succeeding influences of the Holy Spirit and the means of grace. See, then, that it be not a mean, unworthy end you propose, or motive that actuates you, either now or in future. The love of fame has been called "the universal passion;" disprove the universality of the maxim, to the content and joy of your own heart, and the confusion of gainsayers, by your subsequent conduct. What I now propose to you, God urged upon Abraham:—"Walk before me, and be thou sincere" in thy ends and motives. And this is what our Lord inculcates on His disciples:—"The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."* Allow the expression, insincerity in a missionary is "death in the pot;" a missionary without sincerity of ends and motives is "salt without savour."

2. Next to the glory of God, let the instruction, conversion, and everlasting happiness of the heathen be steadily intended, even when you may not think it expedient openly to avow the design. This uprightness your present solemn engagement requires. It is almost incredible what wonders this principle—steadiness of aim—has produced in every department and concern of life; and God has ever honoured it in His servants. The highest efforts of mental power, the greatest brilliancy of parts, have failed of success when this was wanting; they promised victory, like Goliah, but ignominiously fell; whereas steadiness of aim, like David, makes no show, and yet succeeds. In all your traffic and covenants, in all your intercourse and public deportment, among the untaught natives of the South Sea Islands, be this your unvaried, inflexible

* Matt. vi. 22.

aim—their salvation. Be this the aim of your prayers and praises, your joys and cares, your sufferings and enjoyments. Be this your meat and drink, because it is our heavenly Father's will. For this plead continually, as a hungry, naked beggar for an alms; for this let your common actions in life be employed; to this your sleeping as well as your wakeful moments be consecrated; to this your education of the heathen children, as well as your set conversation or discourses to their parents; to this the education of your own children, and the conduct of your families; to this all your connexions and engagements with the natives.

Thus principled and employed, you will tread in the steps of our common Lord, who laid aside His own ease and honour,—who, though He was rich, for our sakes became poor,—denied Himself for our advantage,—took upon Him the form of a servant, and made Himself of no reputation. In this, therefore, be ye followers of Christ as dear children. But, as sincerity of principle and steadiness of aim require an instrument with which to work—

3. Cultivate a greater acquaintance with the purity and simplicity of the gospel. By this also prove the sincerity of your profession. This is the word He has honoured above all His name; this is the wisdom and power of God, the arm of His strength, the sword of His Spirit. Evangelical truths are the weapons of your warfare; let them not be covered with unsightly rust, nor blunted by too much polish. Mind chiefly the edge. Remember also that the word is a two-edged sword, the law and the gospel,—the one to strike conviction into the consciences of sinners; the other to cut off sin from the believer in Jesus, as well as to lop off and consign to destruction all apostates.* Divine revelation is a bright, pure, well-polished mirror; do not disfigure it with unholy and foolish fancies, though they sparkle in your eye like diamonds. The gospel is pure, wholesome milk; do not adulterate it with the water of your own fountain—corrupted reason. The gospel is a net; do not alter the meshes to be either greater or smaller than the Divine appointment. But keep in mind, my brethren, that a growing acquaintance with the purity and simplicity of the gospel is the effect of Divine teaching; seek, therefore, with all humble importunity, the "unction from the Holy One," that ye may "know all things."

* See Heb. ii. 1–3, iv. 11, 12.

It is indeed possible that, to induce a *profession* of Christianity, some human mixtures or additions may be useful; but God does not allow any of His servants to be wise above what is written; He will not have His bright and precious jewel, the gospel, obscured and defiled with gaudy decorations. Many, like Saul, pretend to offer a sacrifice to the Lord by human additions, but the Lord's answer to his plea by Samuel is a sufficient reply to all intruders:—"Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."* Take for your example and guide the great apostle of the Gentiles:—"I determined not to know anything among you," says he to the Corinthians, "save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."† And to the Galatians, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."‡

The prophets and apostles do not set themselves formally to prove the being and perfections of God, as learned *hypothesis* would probably advise; but the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus, and the glory of the New Testament minister is to point Him out as "the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world,"—to exhibit Him, from the Divine oracles, as God-man, Mediator, born to die for our sins, and dying to rise and reign for our justification, and finally our glorification. The repeated experience of others has abundantly proved the preference due to this simplicity of teaching, before any other method, however learned and laboured. Thus furnished, permit me to recommend to you—

4. An alternate regard to private and social religion. By neglecting *personal* holiness, you will degenerate into men of the world; worldly maxims will prevail, your zeal will be damped, your minds become earthly, your religion a lifeless image, and your profession an unmeaning name. By neglecting *social* religion, you will not be missionaries but hermits; you might as well stay at home, live in some lonely cottage, retire into the highlands of Scotland, or the mountains of Wales. Let, therefore, converse with God in solitude be subservient to public utility. Enter your hut or wander into woods to converse with Jesus, to maintain spirituality, to plead for your idolatrous neighbours; and

* 1 Sam. xv. 22. † 1 Cor. ii. 2. ‡ Gal. vi. 14.

then, warmed with this holy fire, go and animate others by social intercourse. Thus your heavenly Father will reward you openly; and heathens will in time learn that none but the disciples of Jesus can be thus happy and thus useful.

Under this head, let me advise you not only to guard against falling out by the way, (which God prevent!) and to love one another out of a pure heart fervently, but even let the poor ignorant natives take knowledge of you, that you do so love one another, and that with the love of benevolence you are affectionately attached to *them*. Let them be constrained to say, "Behold how these new-comers love one another!" How pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! Of this union, some of us of late have seen delightful examples. We see it also this day. My brethren, we commission you this morning, in the name of the Lord, to make a fair report of the lovely scenes which you have beheld, to the teachable natives of Otaheite! Tell them what you have seen, in the best manner you are able, so as to convey the sentiment into their inmost souls. Assure them by your testimony and example, that the religion of Jesus leads to happiness. Say, Have fellowship with us, for "truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ;" the God we adore, the Saviour we serve. In this connexion I would add—

5. Aim at exemplifying the religion of Jesus in all its parts. There are few human characters without many spots, and all in our world have some; it is therefore our wisdom to discover and correct them in ourselves and others. But how is this to be done? By looking into the glass of the word, which will faithfully exhibit each one to himself. He who endeavours to walk before God uprightly, aims more at removing imperfections first than performing brilliant exploits. Study, therefore, your defects with a view to pardon and amendment; then you will be better able, when they ask you, What meaneth your new religion? to answer them, Come and see. Follow us in every step of our walk; observe us in all our private and public, personal and relative concerns. Behold us patient in tribulations, forbearing when provoked, honest though able to impose, doing to others as we would be done by, wishing and doing good to our very enemies, enduring all things for the elect's sake, that they may be saved. Though we are equal as brethren, yet observe us, we know how to submit to our superiors, we know how to observe due subordination among ourselves.

And as this exemplification of religion in all its parts is the best practical answer to the question, What is Christianity? so it is the most likely way to your success. He who thus aims, and studies, and strives to honour God, will be honoured by Him, and shall be honourably rewarded. "Walk before me, and be thou perfect," says God, "and I will multiply thee exceedingly, ... and thou shalt be a father of many nations, ... and I will make thee exceeding fruitful." I now add—

6. Be more attentive to duty than even to success. Uprightness and sincerity will regard the will and authority of God, leaving all events to Him—to His adorable and sovereign disposal. A man of real faith, in its free exercise, will not object and murmur, though God demand an Isaac in sacrifice. But should we be unconcerned about success? By no means. But everything in its due order. You may desire success much, but should still more earnestly desire to walk before God in uprightness, according to the solemn promise you have now made. And if you have but a little success, do not "despise the day of small things."

The human mind is busy in anticipation; you already portray to yourselves what sort of a voyage you are likely to have,—what reception on your arrival,—what habitations, manners, and employments? Be not over-anxious about these things, but mind more present duty. Let our text resound in your ears, and daily recur to your thoughts, "Walk before me, and be thou upright." You will see, perhaps, for a season, but little, very little fruit of your labour; but "who hath despised the day of small things?" Think of the husbandman, who casts into the ground the principal wheat, and waits for the crop with patience. The gospel is leaven; and it must have time to operate. The gospel is a preserving salt; it must have time to penetrate. The gospel is a grain of mustard-seed; it must have time to grow.

The way to success, even to surprising success, is often intricate. Viewing Joseph in the pit, or in the prison, who but the Omniscient could have predicted his future prosperity? Who that saw the danger of Jonah, of Daniel, of Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, would have considered their preservation as within the scope of possibility? What wonders were wrought by means of illiterate apostles, evangelists, and disciples, when God commanded success! View, on the one hand, the gigantic powers of this world; on the other, the despised Nazarene, as a "stone cut out without hands,

breaking them to pieces." "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces." It is added, "and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." * I ask again, "Who hath despised the day of small things?" The stateliest oak was once an acorn, the mightiest river may be traced to a nameless rill; our own highly-favoured country was once a land of stupid ignorance and vile idolatry. He, therefore, who commanded the north to give up, and it was so, can also say to the south, "Keep not back," and it shall be so. To facilitate the performance of these duties enjoined, let me advise you—

7. To contemplate with assiduity and affection the character of God, as displayed in His word, and in His favourite servants in all ages. To walk before God, or *with* God, as Enoch walked, must imply a contemplation of, and affection for His true character; but what I would now particularly recommend to you, as greatly conducive to the end proposed, is to read and observe attentively the self-denying characters of those men who, bearing much of the Divine image, have stood forth publicly to confess Him before men. In the Holy Scriptures you have a "cloud of witnesses," whom you will not fail to contemplate and to imitate. Above all, be assiduous in "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame." Read, with continual retrospect and prayer, the lives of the patriarchs and prophets, the Acts of the Apostles, the history of the first Christians by Eusebius, (which if you have not already, I hope you will be provided with,) the most authentic holy lives and martyrologies, the best journals of missionaries,—especially the life and journal of Brainerd, that highly-favoured man of God, written by another who had drunk deep of the same spirit, Mr Jonathan Edwards, of New England.—Having thus endeavoured to give you my best advice, directions, and remarks, relative to your character and conduct as missionaries, I now proceed—

II. To propose to you such encouragements as your arduous undertaking requires, and which our all-sufficient God affords you. "I am God all-sufficient." Under this branch of our subject it

* Dan. ii. 34, 35.

would be improper, on several accounts, to detain you long. Briefly, then, let me suggest to you the following particulars:—

1. Under every trial, hardship, or perplexing difficulty, know assuredly that, while in the way of duty, you have a covenant interest in the all-sufficiency of God. In every station there are difficulties, in a Christian mission many and peculiar ones; but this one thought, if properly realised, must ever prove an adequate remedy, "I am God all-sufficient." How well adapted this consideration is to answer the end proposed, is evident from the circumstances that first occasioned its application to Abraham. Promises were made, but difficulties so great appeared in the way of their accomplishment, that this consideration, and this alone, was equal to the difficulty.

My brethren, there are different sorts of trials. There are trials and snares even from prosperity. Prosperity! say you, (with hearts trembling in apprehension of the reverse,) who of *us* can expect prosperity? But are you not going to an island encircled with sensual delights, for the sake of returning to which a ship's crew mutinied? Ah, remember the history of the antediluvian church. Let the "sons of God" beware of the "daughters of men." Do not mistake me; I would not dissuade any from forming an honourable and godly connexion; but see first that it be honourable and godly. Let not the Christian missionary, the Christian mechanic, be dazzled with the prospect of alliance with the families of chiefs, in the presumptuous hope of making them afterwards Christians. Are you wiser than Solomon? Ah, my brethren, fly to the all-sufficient God,—for He alone can help you in so great a temptation,—that the daughters of the land do not bear away your hearts, until they are made the daughters of God. Do not imagine that this branch of my subject is needless. I firmly believe, and therefore openly speak, that some of your greatest trials, in process of time, will arise from this quarter; that in no instance more than this will you have greater need of having recourse to "God Almighty," "God all-sufficient." May the God of Joseph be with you, and help you to act as he did! He prevailed and prospered because God was with him; and the same God is all-sufficient for you. You are going to the land of Goshen, and the way thither is long; but think, who holds the ocean in the hollow of His hand? If billows rise, if storms break in upon you, cast the anchor of your hope within the vail, to

Jesus in the highest heavens, that you may be sure and steadfast in your minds.

2. The Lord Jesus Christ, whose you are by redemption and grace, and to whom you dedicate yourselves for this blessed work, has all power and authority in heaven, earth, and hell, for your good; and He hath declared that He "will be with you alway." Ye are going, as ye have heard, as lambs among wolves, but the Great Shepherd of the sheep will be with you. View Him holding in His hand the recompense of reward, and hear Him say, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna. A short season hence, and you shall see and receive a crown of life." Even now He speaks in loud and firm accents, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

3. Take encouragement from the covenant, office, and promised influences of the Holy Spirit. All Christians may indeed take encouragement from this very important consideration; but as none have greater need, so none have a greater right than you. What lifted up Christ's first missionaries when cast down, supported them when weak, directed their feet through a path beset with doubts and darkness? Who but the Comforter! "He shall take of mine," said Jesus, "and shall shew it unto you. He shall guide you into all truth." By *Him* it shall be given to you in the hour of need what to speak, and what to do.

A CHARGE

DELIVERED AT THE ORDINATION OF THE REV. S. BRADLEY.

2 Timothy ii. 7.

"Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things."

This day, my Christian friend and brother, you have made a solemn and public avowal of your religious views, doctrines, and resolutions. You have taken upon you the pastoral care of the infant society meeting at this place, "not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind." * In doing this you have done well; for "this is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a" Christian "bishop," a consistent overseer of God's heritage, "he desireth a good work," † a work truly and eminently good. But you will always keep in mind that this important engagement is a *work;* not a nominal office, not a sinecure, not a situation for indulged ease and ignoble pleasures.

For the right discharge of that momentous office which you have now undertaken, there are duties to be performed and qualifications required of a high order: such duties as have given full employ to the profoundest wisdom and the most extensive talents; and such qualifications as may well cause a thoughtful and humble man to tremble. These were the objects which the great apostle Paul contemplated when he made that pathetic exclamation, "Who is sufficient for these things!" ‡ Yet, remember, as it is an office of God's appointment, you may rest assured that He will afford His faithful servants all the assistance which their arduous engagements may require; and, conscious that you are one of that number, you may safely apply that encouraging consideration to yourself.

* 1 Pet. v. 2. † 1 Tim. iii. 1. ‡ 2 Cor. ii. 16.

As this day marks the commencement of your pastoral employ, I would now, not in virtue of any assumed superiority of ministerial degree, but in consequence of your own request, proceed to remind you, from these words of the apostle Paul to his beloved Timothy, and what the immediate context may suggest, first, what is the substance or matter of your pastoral duties; and, secondly, the grand qualifications for discharging them aright. May nothing be advanced by me, while discussing and recommending these important points, unworthy of that attention which you are prepared to give; and may you be enabled so to improve them as eventually to contribute to our mutual joy and gratitude!

I. Let me call your attention to the matter of your duties. "Consider *what* I say;" that is, the important particulars which relate to the gospel ministry.

In order to obtain a full display of your duty in all its parts, you should make the whole of the two epistles to Timothy, and that to Titus, (and indeed all the New Testament,) familiar to your thoughts, and in this revealed light peruse with diligence the best works which treat professedly of the subject. All that you can reasonably expect from me, on the present occasion, will be the selection of a few particulars which are suggested by the context, and which I consider of the first importance to your comfort and success.

1. Be firm and steadfast in the truth and grace of Christ. "Thou therefore, my son," saith Paul in the first verse of this chapter, "be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus." Remember that the "grace and truth" of the gospel "came by Jesus Christ," and that He is "full of truth and grace." Even for a private Christian what can be of greater consideration than that He should "hold fast the form of sound words, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus;" * and that he should be "valiant for the truth upon the earth," especially at a time when so many vain contentions are introduced, and so much pernicious error, in a thousand forms, is industriously propagated?

View a steady Christian, surrounded by the noxious vapours of error, and the tempting baits of sensual pleasures; then ask, How comes he to be proof against the infection of the one, and the fascinating power of the other? He can reply, The grace of Christ is my sufficiency. His power is made perfect in my weakness; by

* 2 Tim. i. 13.

faith and prayer I receive a heavenly antidote against every mortal error; I rely on the immutable truth of the promises, which are all "Yea and amen in Christ Jesus." To this it is owing that he is ever "steadfast and immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord," for he is firmly persuaded that "his labour is not in vain in the Lord." On the contrary, were he to neglect the rock of truth, on which he builds his faith and hope, or to slight the unsearchable riches of Christ, from whence his constant supplies are derived, weakness, poverty, and ruin would immediately ensue.

If, therefore, it be of such moment in a private character to have a continual regard to Christ, the grand truths of His word, and the all-sufficiency of His "grace to help in time of need," how much more important must such a regard be in a public, a ministerial character,—in one who should be an example to his flock in all things! Yet momentous and interesting as this must appear, steadfastness in the truth of Christ is not always found in those who are professed teachers of it. Nor is the most solemn designation to this office, even apostolic ordination, a sufficient bulwark against the most ruinous instability. "This thou knowest," says St Paul, "that all they which be in Asia are turned away from me."* Many names of such persons are on record in the New Testament, to their everlasting infamy. Oh that modern history did not furnish us with too many instances of the same cast! But I firmly trust it is not so you have learned Christ. I trust that His word, in all its precious and interesting parts, is dearer to you than life itself; and that nothing, therefore, will be considered by you a sufficient inducement to sell that glorious body of Divine truth which you have this day publicly confessed.

Permit me, however, to add, that the very best security against all deviations from the line of revealed truth, and against all the smiles, caresses, and flattering seductions of error, is to "be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus." It is indeed "good for the heart to be established with grace" for every purpose, but for this purpose in a most emphatical sense. Regard Christ, therefore, as "full of grace and truth," and out of that fulness receive by faith daily "and grace for grace," renewed supplies, and increasing degrees.

2. Be concerned that the truth of Christ be preached and propagated by all suitable means. "The things thou hast heard of

* 2 Tim. i. 15.

me," says St Paul, "among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." As if he had said, Not only preach the word thyself, but also be feelingly concerned for its propagation in the world by all prudent measures.

Allow me, then, to remind you that one of your principal cares must be to preach the word of the living God in a proper manner. Daily and earnestly endeavour to become thoroughly acquainted with your Bible. Avail yourself of all the assistance you can procure from prayer and meditation, from books and friendly intercourse. Aim at understanding the design of the Holy Spirit in every text; and be assured that the true design is always worthy of the Divine perfections and character. A consciousness of having the particular design of the Holy Spirit in your eye, and that you are imparting and improving this in a rational, interesting, and affectionate way, will give you a confidence and courage, a delight and zeal in your work, which, without them, no art can ever successfully imitate.

When fully satisfied that you understand the mind of God in your text, and that you have in it a subject not only important in itself, but also suitable to your audience, taking into the account the time, place, and other circumstances, you will proceed to arrange your thoughts; on which depends, in a considerable degree, the edification of your people, and your pleasure in the work. Often, I am persuaded, has the barren, uncomfortable feeling of the preacher been ascribed to the want of Divine assistance, and to that alone, which ought to be ascribed, at least in a great measure, to his own indolence, or want of holy skill in fixing his plan, and arranging his thoughts. It is indeed an excellent rule, applicable alike to praying and preaching, but more especially to the latter—to prepare as if you expected no assistance, and so to depend on Divine assistance as if you had made no preparation.

Our forefathers, the Puritans and Nonconformists, whose pulpit labours and writings have been so much owned of God to answer the great ends of preaching, were peculiarly partial to one popular method, namely, that of doctrine, reasons, and uses,—a method so excellent and comprehensive that, of all others, it affords the preacher the fullest scope. Nevertheless, in the hands of the worthy persons alluded to, it may be compared to an edged tool finely tempered, but often tarnished with rust, and seldom or never well polished.

With a view to acquire aptitude and ease in forming the best plans, often consult, closely examine, and analyse the productions of the best writers, especially the best orations and sermons, both ancient and modern. Learn from all, but borrow from none. And, as to the execution of your plan, I would say, in stating your doctrine, theology, the mistress, may appear in her proper dress; but, in stating the reasons, and urging the uses of the doctrine, logic and rhetoric, the handmaids, should never appear in the forms of independent arts, claiming notice on their own account.

In this connexion, I would recommend with peculiar solicitude a prevailing regard to the moral and spiritual improvement of each doctrine, and that every subject be handled in a manner at once affectionate, close, and practical, with the light of knowledge, and the heat of animated devotion. Study plainness and perspicuity as of the first importance, whether in stating your subject, enforcing your arguments, or in the use of illustrations. Never attempt to produce conviction without argument, either explicit or implied; and argument never will be more forcible than when it appears to arise from the main subject, or contributes to effect a unity of design. In order to be pathetic, suffer the subject to dwell upon your own heart long enough to soften and affect it. This you will ever find to be the nearest and the most certain way to the hearts and consciences of your hearers.

If you would attain the chief glory of a Christian preacher, cultivate affectionate faithfulness. Genuine affection will insinuate itself like the purest oil, and greatly facilitate those movements which you wish to excite for the benefit of your hearers. But in doing this you will not aim at accommodating your subjects to the carnal prejudices, the ignorance, or corrupt passions of any. You will not conceal the humbling, the self-annihilating doctrines of sovereign grace, discriminating mercy, gratuitous justification, and perseverance in faith and holiness as the pure effects of Divine purpose. The carnal mind will revolt at these things, because it *is* carnal; but your business is to please God, and not to please men, except for their edification.

You will think it of importance, I am persuaded, by all prudent and compassionate measures, to expose the fashionable vices of this place, declaring plainly, by an appeal to revealed authority and convincing arguments, the awful consequences of such carnal

pursuits. Read often the thirty-third chapter of Ezekiel, with a view to preach alarmingly; and the twentieth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, with a design to preach, exhort, or converse pathetically. Christianity does not countenance rudeness, or the want of genuine courtesy; nor will its noble spirit suffer you to be criminally complaisant, swayed by undue influence, or studious of applause, from men of property, liberality, or any mere external distinctions, in defiance of the sacred dictates of rectitude.

But preaching, recollect, though the principal, is not the only way of propagating the truth of Christ. Your next care should be to instruct the young and the ignorant, in order to prepare them for higher attainments. Nothing has been more useful for this purpose than the much-neglected service of catechising; for which, as the first happy means of their salvation, thousands now in glory bless God. For want of this kind of previous instruction, many grow up to manhood, and even to gray hairs, under public means, without any tolerably consistent views of gospel doctrines. Is it any wonder, then, that they should be unable to judge of "sound speech that cannot be condemned," or purity of doctrine; that they should be dupes to the first plausible error that is presented to them in an engaging dress; and that the Christian education of their own children is in turn neglected; or, which is no small detriment to the real edification of the church, that a minister, in order to be understood by so great a part of his audience, should be for ever laying down the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, and never attempt to "go on unto perfection?"

St Paul gives in charge to Timothy a solicitous care that the truth may be propagated in the world, not merely by his own labours, but also by "faithful men who shall be able to teach others also." A preacher who is so far satisfied with his own charge as to become indifferent about the propagation of the gospel in other places, and by other persons, hardly deserves the name of a minister of Christ, whose parting charge to His disciples was, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Such benevolent ardour should, however, be tempered with Christian prudence and moderation. It is that steadiness of principle which teaches to watch and embrace favourable opportunities which our Divine Master approves, more than momentary flashes of bold and imprudent zeal.

3. Expect hardships in the discharge of your duty, and prepare

to endure them in a manner becoming a disciple and minister of Christ. "Thou therefore," says Paul, "endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." It is nothing more than common Christian prudence, in every disciple who desires to live godly in Christ Jesus, to expect persecutions or other trials on account of religion. Hence the state of a Christian in this world may well be called a warfare; he has innumerable foes to his happiness, however innocent his life, or retired his situation. How much more, then, may a minister of Christ expect oppositions or trials! —a character whose very business it is to oppose wickedness in every shape, who is bound by his office to "warn every man," and to be "instant in season, out of season," in the pulpit and the parlour, among people of every rank and complexion, not merely as a matter of course, but also as a duty enforced by the sacred calls of scriptural authority and of conscience; in a word, a man whose office requires him to "reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine."

But you should not only expect hardships, you should also prepare to endure them in a manner truly Christian. As a disciple of Christ, "consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself;" Him who "left us an example that we should follow His steps," and who, "when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously."* Consider also how His favourite servants behaved in like circumstances:—"Being reviled," say they, "we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat."† "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." "Consider what I say."

4. Guard against being encumbered with worldly concerns of any kind, to the prejudice of your own soul and your great work. "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." I find no fault with pious, prudent, sensible, and well-informed men, who, believing it to be their duty in the course of Divine providence, exhort their neighbours to flee from the wrath to come, and not to neglect the great salvation of the gospel. Nor yet would I censure those who, from conscientious motives, or local necessity, help their supporters by consistent industrious efforts. But I cannot think so favourably of others who have avowedly and

* 1 Pet. ii. 21, 23. † 1 Cor. iv. 12, 13.

publicly "given themselves continually to prayer, and the ministry of the word,"* and afterward without just cause entangle themselves with the affairs of this life.

If, moreover, such a step should proceed from the love of money; if, discontented with "food and raiment," or the common comforts of life, and spurning the enjoyment of mediocrity, a minister of the gospel hungers after the root of all evil, is it any matter of surprise that he should "fall into temptation and a snare, and pierce himself through with many sorrows?" "But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."† "Consider what I say; and the Lord give you understanding in all things."

5. In all your work keep a steady eye on the Divine rule. "If a man strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully." Your plain rule is the gospel of revelation, the law of holy liberty; if, therefore, you would act as a child of light in this benighted world, have respect continually to this infallible word, "as unto a light that shineth in a dark place."‡

They who are intent on pursuing unscriptural novelties, and such niceties as gratify their own vanity rather than promote the interest of truth and the glory of God, are not to be envied. "How long," saith Jeremiah, "shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? Yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart; which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams, as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal. The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord."§ "To the law and to the testimony" therefore; "if any speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."‖ In support of your instructions, and in recommendation of your conduct, may you ever have it to say, with undaunted confidence, "Thus saith the Lord."

6. In looking for the fruit of your labour, let expectation be tempered with patience. "The husbandman who laboureth," says our apostle, "must be first partaker of the fruits;" or, more properly, it may be rendered, "in order to partake of the fruits, it

* Acts vi. 4. † 1 Tim. vi. 9–12. ‡ 2 Pet. i. 19.
§ Jer. xxiii. 26–28. ‖ Isa. viii. 20.

behoves the husbandman first to labour." Do not conclude that the Lord has no people, or but very few, in this place, or in this neighbourhood, because they are not immediately converted and gathered into your fold; or that there will be no religious revival, because not at the present period, or the time of your wish. Imitate the husbandman both in sowing the seed of the spiritual kingdom, and in waiting for the fruits. But it is full time that I should proceed to state—

II. The qualifications which are necessary for the right discharge of these, and, indeed, of all other parts of your pastoral duties. These qualifications are clearly suggested, or rather fairly implied, in these few words:—"Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things." Here is, we may observe, first, something to be done on your part, as well calculated to prepare you for your arduous work; and, secondly, something to be expected from God, without whose aids we can do nothing.

1. Every part of your work is to be entered upon by suitable consideration. "*Consider* what I say." Not only know the various parts of duty, but also endeavour to make them familiar to your thoughts, and see that the affections be interested in them. Revolve in your mind those objects that are best adapted to make you feel your obligations, to rouse your vigilance, and invigorate your pursuits. Those objects, I acknowledge, are numerous as the parts of revealed truth, and the reasons of your conduct; and, therefore, cannot be sufficiently particularised on this occasion. There are, however, some things, by frequently adverting to which you would, I am persuaded, find no small advantage.

Seriously and affectingly consider, however conscious you may be of integrity and the best motives, what it is to be a Christian minister without the final approbation of Jesus Christ, the Judge of all; what it is to have a talent, and not to employ it; to know the Divine Master's will, and not do it; to preach Him to others, and afterwards be a "castaway;" to prophesy in His name, and to eat at His table, and after all to hear the final sentence, "I know you not, depart from me."

On the other hand, consider the blessed consequence of being found faithful, and especially of turning many to righteousness. Though not successful, yet if privileged with faithfulness, your abundant reward is with the Lord. "Though Israel be not

gathered, yet shall you be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and your God shall be your strength." * But if, moreover, God should honour you with turning many to righteousness, a higher glory awaits you:—"They that be wise shall shine as the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." †

Now, in order to secure so blessed an end, consider the spirituality that ought to run through the whole of your work, both in private and public. Ministerial services without spirituality are no better than salt without savour. Even your own mind, endued with just sentiments and a holy taste, can be satisfied with nothing less; and the most excellent of your hearers always will, and not without reason, expect it. In reference to this point, often call to mind our Lord's very striking representation:—"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." ‡ Or, as another evangelist expresseth it, "Salt is good; but if the salt have lost its saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves." §

In order more effectually to dispose your mind to your work, you will do well to consider very attentively how numerous are your obligations to be found faithful: faithful to God, to His awful justice, and His amazing love,—faithful to Christ, who has put you into the ministry of His glorious gospel,—faithful to men, who look to you as their spiritual instructor, to the wise and to the unwise,—faithful to yourself, who are one day to give an account of your stewardship. The vows of God are upon you; the undertaking is your voluntary act; the honour of God is concerned in your work, and, for ought you know, the happiness, the everlasting happiness of numbers.

Permit me once more to hint at the great extent of your ministerial duties, and how they ought, every one of them, without exception, to be directed to one point—namely, to please Him who hath chosen and called you to this arduous employ. On a review of these things, we may well say, "Who is sufficient" for them? It is well for us that "what is impossible with men is possible with God." Oh, my friend, what encouragement is there in these words, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect

* Isa. xlix. 5. † Dan. xii. 3. ‡ Matt. v. 13. § Mark ix. 50.

in weakness!"* This leads me to notice another most important point of ministerial qualification; that is to say—

2. Divine teaching. "And the *Lord give thee understanding* in all things." The connecting particle, which our translators render *and*, may be considered in this place either as a sign of something added, or of causality, or else of contrast. The other word, which we render *give*, as expressive of prayer or wish, is, according to some Greek copies, *shall give*. Admitting the words have this latitude of signification, they are designed to shew us, first, that, in addition to a devout and serious consideration, Divine teaching is necessary; and that, by the use of the former, the latter would be granted. Again, admitting the intimation of causality, the argument is equally forcible. "Consider what I say; *for* the Lord shall give thee understanding in all things." Let not the arduous nature and multiplicity of the duties enumerated operate as an insuperable discouragement; for the Lord, by His teaching, will make the most intricate to appear plain, and the most formidable easy to be managed. Finally, if we take the words in the way of contrast, they inculcate an important sentiment. "Consider what I say; *but* the Lord shall give thee understanding in all things." Duty is your part; but success—and in order to success proper knowledge, true wisdom, and heavenly teaching—is the part of God; who, in your use of means, will give you the desire of your heart, abundant usefulness, though, it is possible, not in the way you expect.

But, in whatever form we take these words, one thing is plain—namely, that, besides consideration, Divine teaching is necessary for a minister of the gospel. And yet, this we are to look for in the use of means. Therefore permit me to urge upon you an endeavour to realise this truth in your mind continually from the Sacred Word, that there *is* Divine teaching, and that God has *promised* it. It is written in the prophets, and recorded by the evangelist, "They shall be all taught of God.'† If this privilege belongs to all God's people, or gospel converts, then much more is there such teaching to the ministers of that gospel included. They may expect, in a more emphatic manner, to be the "taught of God,"—His disciples or scholars, in a higher class. It is not enough that there is a spirit in man, a mind capable of considera-

* 2 Cor. xii. 9.

† John vi. 45. See also Isa. ii. 2–5, liv. 13; Jer. xxxi. 34; Mic. iv. 1–4.

tion; but, in order to spiritual attainments, the inspiration of the Almighty must give a higher kind of understanding to all the heirs of salvation, and especially to those who teach and proclaim it. It is the special office of the Spirit of truth and holiness to lead the Christian minister into all important evangelical truth; not merely by the word of revelation, but also by that sacred illuminating influence, which is called an unction from the Holy One.

Will you, my dear friend, bear with me a little longer, and suffer the word of exhortation? It is this: continually expect to receive a still greater portion of Divine grace and influence than you have yet received. Look to the Lord that you may be often baptized from above; that He may shed His Holy Spirit on you more abundantly. What any of us have as yet attained is comparatively little to what we may attain. In the whole of your work and preparations, and in a more especial manner in matters of difficulty, look to God for fresh communications. Seek and wait for a clear understanding, a sound judgment, holy prudence, and singleness of intention. If your eye be single, your whole body of doctrine will be full of light. You will then think and act as an ambassador of Christ, as a traveller to eternity, to an eternity of blessedness: knowing the terrors of the Lord, you will persuade men; and having tasted that He is gracious, you will proclaim His grace and love. Tasting daily of the refreshing stream of consolation, you will thirst for the celestial fountain. You have learned the rudiments of the divine life and of ministerial service; wait at the feet of your Divine Teacher for further instruction, for deeper knowledge, a richer experience. I must not, I cannot enlarge, without violating that prudence I have now recommended. "Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things." Amen.

A CHARGE

DELIVERED AT THE ORDINATION OF THE REV. JOHN HAWKSLEY.

You have now entered, my dear brother, on an engagement which is at once great, arduous, and honourable; and indeed, viewed as it ought to be, in the light of a future state, to which all of us are making rapid advances, the ministerial work is the most important and awful that can occupy the talents and the time of any man. Civil and political engagements, when viewed in the light of time only, may be greater, more arduous, and more honourable; and they require peculiar talents, courage, and address. But what is time to eternity? what is the body, whether natural or politic, to the immortal soul? what are the riches of this world compared with those of heaven? It is granted, that to maintain order in a state, to regulate the movements of so complicated a machine, to enact salutary laws, and to execute them with wisdom and impartiality; to cultivate the sciences and the useful arts with success; to restrain licentiousness, and to encourage liberty; in a word, effectually to promote national prosperity, are objects of no small magnitude. But great as they are, impartial reason must pronounce, that they are only the outworks of real happiness, only the scaffoldings of substantial glory. For what are any, what are all worldly distinctions, without that religion which brings "life and immortality to light?" To be a minister of this religion, my friend,—of that gospel which brings everlasting salvation, that kingdom of God which cannot be moved, but endureth for ever, —is your distinguished privilege.

It is not easy for me to advance anything on this occasion which your own reflections have not anticipated; and these reflections have been aided by your having had access to valuable authors on

the subject of the gospel ministry and the pastoral office; and you will have the advantage, at proper intervals, of re-perusing them. But as we all need "line upon line," and as the present solemn occasion is favourable for the renewal of useful impressions, I shall endeavour, according to your desire and request, and looking to God for His assistance and blessing, to stir up your mind by way of remembrance, in an exhortation, or, in conformity to common usage, a charge, founded on

2 Timothy ii. 15.

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

Or, as the text might be rendered, "Give studious diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman without confusion, rightly dividing the word of truth." You will easily perceive that there are several important ideas implied in this charge of St Paul to Timothy. It implies, for example, that a minister of the gospel should be studious,—not pleasure-taking or dissipated in his thoughts and affections, but attentive, collected, and orderly. Nor is this all; he should direct his studies to a worthy end, an end suited to his general engagements and his peculiar situation. These particulars the apostle Paul distinctly notices when he says, in addressing young Timothy, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God;" or unto *Christ*, according to some copies of the original. On our professed principles, this variety makes no difference. However, this is manifest, that it is not sufficient to be in the actual service of God, to work in His husbandry, to labour at His building, and to preach His word; but the grand aim should be to obtain His approbation in so doing.

This exhortation further implies that a gospel minister, while he keeps a worthy end in view, should be laborious,—"a workman,"—not idle, not slothful, not sauntering away his time, which is more precious than jewels, but active and diligent. Whatever he does for God, should be done with his "might," with needful energy and regular despatch. If any business demand diligence, surely it is this; and in no case can the sacred proverb be more applicable than in the present:—"The hand of the diligent maketh rich." He should often remind himself of this question, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" And when he suspects himself

to be out of his proper sphere of action, he may profitably recollect another interrogation, "What dost thou here, Elijah?"

These words imply, moreover, that ministers may, in a sense, be "workmen," and yet need to be "ashamed," either through want of care, or of diligence, or of skill. When a man has good materials, proper instruments, and sufficient time, and yet his production, the result of his labour, is not "workman-like," (if I may be allowed the expression,) he has need to be ashamed; he has been guilty of some criminal neglect. How many there are in the sacred office who deservedly fall under this censure, it is not for me to say; but I may express my hope and persuasion that this will not apply to you, except in a sense which is common to us all.

Once more, the words imply, that though the gospel be "the word of truth," there may be a failure in our not "rightly dividing it,"—in our not wisely preparing, or faithfully preaching the word,—in not separating what human fancy has associated with or superadded to it. Subjects may not be properly chosen for the time, or place, or occasion,—doctrines not practically improved,—duties not recommended from evangelical motives. The characters of men may not be suitably discriminated,—important truths not skilfully explained, nor profitably applied,—or the commandments of men may be intermixed with the laws of God. The ways of defect and failure are indeed innumerable, whether we consider the matter of pastoral instruction, or the manner of dispensing it.

But my chief design is not so much to explain the text, as to improve it to our present purpose. And this I shall endeavour to do, in recommending to you a worthy *end*, which you should always and steadily aim at, and some of the most proper *means* of attaining that end. More particularly, allow me, first, to offer some reasons to prove the great importance of seeking a worthy end—the Divine approbation—in every part of your ministry; in other words, why you should aim, above all things, to shew yourself "approved unto God" as the great end of your labours: secondly, to suggest some considerations in order to shew that studious application, unremitted exertion, and holy skill are necessary for attaining the end proposed: thirdly, to close my address with some encouraging hints which may tend to excite a vigorous prosecution of so arduous an employ. And now, may He who

holdeth the stars in His right hand, who is the head of Divine influence to the Church, and who quickeneth whom He will, prepare my heart to communicate, and yours to receive what may be spoken, that we may have occasion to bless Him, and to rejoice together!

I. I would offer a few *reasons to prove the great importance* of seeking the approbation of God as the chief end of your ministry, and of every part of your labours.

In general, we all acknowledge, that to glorify God, in order that we may enjoy Him through the whole of our existence, is our chief end. Now, to seek His approbation and to glorify Him, are inseparable. For he who glorifies God, or acknowledges and endeavours to represent Him as glorious, cannot be indifferent to His approbation; and, on the contrary, he who worthily studies to approve himself unto God, cannot be indifferent to His glory. He who regards God as infinitely excellent, and who wills everything for the same end which God proposes, at once promotes His glory, and is in the direct way to obtain His approving sentence. Nor can there be any enjoyment of God without being approved of Him. For the idea of being admitted to so great a privilege without His approbation is inconceivable; and surely the reverse—the idea of being approved of God, and yet excluded from His favour, and the ultimate enjoyment of that favour—is contrary to Scripture and reason. But, leaving these general remarks, allow me to advance a few reasons of a more *specific* nature, in order to shew the importance of your keeping in view this grand end. And here you will recognise, as no slight argument—

1. That to Him alone, whose approbation you are constantly to aim at, you are ultimately accountable. Imbibe the spirit, and adopt the language, of that highly-favoured and eminently successful minister of Christ who said, "With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of man's judgment: he that judgeth me is the Lord." God, in the person of the Lord Jesus, is our final Judge, to whom the last appeal must be made from every tribunal of human judgment. What shall it profit us, should we gain the applause of the whole world, and after all fail to obtain the plaudit of our God and Saviour? Let me therefore charge you, and I would charge myself, to keep this thought always alive:—"I watch for souls as one who must give an account:" to whom? not to men, not to angels, but to God. He will bring every work and

every word into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil. His approbation is life; His disapprobation is death. Yet a little while and He makes His appearance. Soon will the proclamation be made—"The judgment is set, and the books are opened." And soon will be pronounced, on corresponding characters, the opposite decisions of either:—"Come, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord;" or, "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness." His judgment is ever according to truth; and there is no higher court, no superior judge. I would next remind you, as a weighty reason—

2. That He alone, whose approbation you are exhorted to seek, can secure the great object of your ministry. For what is that object? Is it not the salvation of immortal souls? In order to this, they must be born of God, created anew in Christ Jesus, justified by grace, made pure in heart, sanctified in body, soul, and spirit. Of Him they must be in Christ, who is the righteousness of His people, and made meet to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light. Let it, then, be settled in our minds that God is the author of salvation, without whom no ministry of man is sufficient. Ministers may sow, and plant, and water; but except God give the increase, no seed will vegetate, no plant will grow. Neither Paul, nor Apollos, nor Cephas, nor any other beings or instruments, are anything without God who giveth the increase. Ministers may travail as in birth, in hope that Christ may be formed in the souls of men, but the children of grace are not born of "the will of man." The heavenly wind blows not according to our desires. Though the word of truth is the appointed mean, yet "of His own will" God begets a spiritual and heavenly race. It is God alone who justifies a fallen sinner; and no one is changed into His image but by His Holy Spirit.

Hence you perceive the urgent necessity of aiming at, and devoutly seeking, the approbation and favour of God. Without His aid and blessing, who is sufficient for these things, or even to think a good thought? But if God be for us, if He approve of our spirit, our aim, and our conduct, who can be against us? While you are conscious of "studying to shew yourself approved unto God," the success He shall be pleased to afford may be viewed, not, indeed, as a reward of merit, but as a peculiar favour, and a token of Divine approbation. And further, while blessed with

the same consciousness of integrity, even when success is not afforded to the extent of your wishes, you may safely ascribe the sovereign proceeding, in granting you a more limited success, not to the displeasure of God, but to His infinite wisdom. While your views and heart are thus fixed, you are sure of an honourable issue, and at the same time, are in the fairest way to success. Them that honour God He has promised to honour. An additional reason for keeping this end in view is—

3. That the Divine approbation alone, as conscientiously and steadily sought, can render your work truly pleasant to yourself, especially in circumstances of trial. From trials you have no just grounds of exemption; they are the common lot of humanity; and, therefore, neither private Christians, nor ministers, nor churches, are exempt. The post of honour is often a post of danger. Not only will trials arise from personal considerations, but many others from sympathy with the people of your charge. In proportion as you enter into the spirit of St Paul, you will be ready to say, "Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?" Now, what will prove the most pleasing consolation under such trials? Will it not be the consciousness of seeking, and the hope of obtaining, the approbation of your Divine Master? If we seek to please men, we shall be harassed and distracted, not knowing whom to please. There will be so many claimants, that we shall always be at a loss. Different persons will expect to be pleased on considerations quite incompatible. But by aiming to please God, as your leading concern, you will get rid of a heavy burden and a fruitless toil. If this be the true state of the case, if men's minds, and tastes, and prejudices are endlessly various, and to please all is impracticable, bend all your efforts to obtain the approbation of God. This will fix the heart, give rest to the judgment, harmony to the affections, and satisfaction to the conscience. Another urgent reason for keeping this great end in view is—

4. That to aim at this continually is the most direct way to be "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed." Shame, arising from disappointed expectation, sooner or later, is sure to be the portion of time-servers and men-pleasers. Study to make sure of the approbation of God, and you shall never be put to shame. He will take care of your best interest:—"He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day."

Whatever work you contemplate, whatever step you are about to take in your Christian and ministerial walk, whatever subject you handle, and whatever advice you give, reflect whether it be approved of God; and if it be, you may safely leave to Him all consequences, without fear of being confounded or danger of being ashamed. Besides, this mode of judging and acting will give you a simplicity of aim and a consistency of conduct, which will become equally habitual, pleasant, and useful. This will prove a steady pole-star in the darkest season, and will enable you to direct your vessel with safety, while many are tossed to and fro with every wind, and are dashed against the rocks or sands. I would now—

II. Suggest some considerations to shew that studious application, unremitting exertion, and holy skill, are *necessary means in order to attain the end proposed.*

When I suggested, that by aiming and purposing to shew ourselves approved unto God we shall be delivered from many unprofitable anxieties and fruitless troubles, it was not intended to convey an opinion, that application, exertion, and skill, are unnecessary. Far from it. The advantage of having a worthy end is not so much an exemption from labour, as a distinguished help to labour with success. For even to keep this end constantly in view, to aim at it continually, and to cultivate this exercise as a habit, is no easy business. To succeed in this course requires great self-denial; it may demand many privations, and cost us hard struggles, tears, and groanings that cannot be uttered. Yet, what are all these compared with the contrary evils? In the field of the careless we see nothing but the seeds of shame and hopeless remorse. The one indeed is painful, but the other is ruinous. Neither stipend, however ample, nor popularity, however great; neither private caresses, nor public applause, nor anything that might be mentioned, can furnish a compensation worthy of a thought. There is therefore no alternative, but to "gird up the loins of your mind," and prepare yourself for the all-momentous business. What I have now, therefore, particularly to offer, are some considerations to shew how necessary it is to study, to strive in the use of means, in order to shew ourselves approved unto God. For consider—

1. That the best of men, however worthy their end, and however pure their principles and motives, have a counteracting principle of sinful depravity to be overcome. When we would do good, the evil is present with us. The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these two are contrary, so that we cannot do the things that we would. This corrupt principle will shew itself in various ways. Self-indulgence will prove a dangerous obstacle. So fully aware was the holy apostle, St Paul, of this besetting evil as an awful reality, that he kept his body under, and brought it into subjection, lest, after he had preached to others, he himself should be "a castaway." Sometimes the fear of man bringeth a snare. The fear of giving offence may be carried too far, and the fear of reproach for being scrupulously circumspect may pervert the judgment, and give an unfavourable bias to the conduct. The love of worldly honour is injurious to the power of faith:—"How can ye believe who receive honour one from another?" It operates as a subtle poison against the life of religion. A thirst for momentary fame should be watched with assiduity, lest the soul imbibe the intoxicating draught. Another consideration contributing to establish what I now propose is—

2. That the work in which you are engaged, and which is requisite for attaining your great end, is not only the most arduous in its nature, but also the most important in its consequences. Things are important, at least are made to appear so, by being compared with other things. But what work is so important as this, on the fairest ground of comparison? It relates to the immortal interests of men, to their eternal happiness or misery. You labour for immortality in a far higher sense than the painter or the sculptor, the architect, or any secular artist. The labours of the mathematician, the mechanic, the astronomer, and the naturalist; of the subtle philosopher, the diligent historian, the ingenious poet; of the agriculturist, the navigator, the politician, and the man of science, when not subservient to religion, all perish with time. "The fashion of this world passeth away." The earth, and all its works of nature and of art, must soon perish in one common ruin, and all the elements shall melt with fervent heat. But the soul never dies; and the happiness of which it is capable, and which is permanent, depends upon religion,—that religion of which you are a minister, and which requires of all its professors diligence and

fervency of spirit, while its public servants should ever be ready to declare to the people of their care, "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you." Moreover—

3. Without studious application, in reference to the great end of your ministry, and your acceptable discharge of it, you have no right to expect a thorough knowledge of the "word of truth," so as "rightly to divide it." That word, the lively oracles of truth, contains a consistent system; but as it has been delivered at sundry times and in divers manners, it requires studious attention and holy skill to develop its connexion and harmony. Nor is it inconsistent with the idea of a revelation from heaven, that it is, in some respects, a mysterious system. If there are mysteries discovered continually in the system of nature, "how passing wonder He who made them such!" Surely, the God of nature, and the methods of His grace, His sovereign mercy and His equitable government, contain adorable depths of wisdom and instruction, as well as the shallow fords of plainer truths. If in human governments there are complicated parts and bearings, so that the minister of state and the law student have room for the closest diligence and severest penetration, why should it be thought singular that sacred subjects require at least an equal share of labour and skill in order to give a just representation of the government, and laws, and merciful dispensations of Jehovah? There is much precious ore of Divine truth far distant from the surface. What less can we infer from the following words of inspired wisdom?—"My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God."

The word of truth is capable of being profitably applied to all cases, however numerous and dissimilar; but to do this in the best manner, or with peculiar interest, requires that a man be "skilful in the word of righteousness," as the result of close and experimental reflection, diligent research, devotion, and prayer. Among your hearers you will find some in an unconverted state; and it is no easy matter to draw aside the folds of ignorance and prejudice from the heart, even instrumentally, and to shew a person

his own guilty and wretched state. And many of these are very differently circumstanced, by education, by prejudices hastily imbibed, by natural tempers, by various pursuits in life, and different degrees of attainment in knowledge. A minister, therefore, who would rightly divide the word of truth, should possess the skill of an able moral physician. Some you will find under awakening convictions, bewildered with legal propensities, and seeking ignorantly the way of safety. There will be required an interpreter, one of a thousand, to shew unto man His justifying righteousness. To deal successfully in such cases, it is necessary that you have experienced in yourself a similar process, and the divinely-appointed way of relief. Here your holy skill will be eminently required, lest you should make sad those whom God would have you comfort, or comfort those who ought to be made sad. Those who have learned best the language of Canaan find it often difficult to talk to such persons, either in public or in private, in a plain and convincing manner. Some, perhaps, you will find to be, though Christians, but little above the carnal, either in knowledge or in temper. They have scarcely learnt the rudiments of saving and exalted knowledge, and this defect is accompanied with the fickle humours of fretful children. A small matter often discomposes them, and sound reason avails less with such wayward spirits than kind treatment and the soothing charities of the mother or the nurse. Some of them will be impatient of control, while others will be too slow or too proud to learn.

As to young men and fathers in Christ, whether of long or short standing in profession, they will be your comfort and glory. But if you are not a diligent student in the Scriptures, you may have, even from these, some painful mortifications. For, if their advances in spiritual knowledge, and in the intricacies of Christian experience, be greater than your own, you will have cause of reproof and matter of humiliation ; and if, under your ministry, they should become spiritually wiser than their teacher, you will have occasion, indeed, to give praise to God, but to take shame to yourself. And may every such instance provoke you to holy emulation, and excite you to resolve, in the power of grace, to keep the lead in every Christian attainment.

In the course of your work you will probably find some in the snares of temptation, others in a backsliding state, some hesitating as to the path of duty, some under the pressure of poverty, and

others under the more dangerous burden of riches. Some may be athirst for prodigality, and others corroded with covetousness; some tried with pining sickness, and in expectation of death, while others are betrayed by the flush of health to the borders of sensual indulgence.—On a review of these hints, is it not plain that he who supposes it requires but little study or care to treat discreetly such a variety of cases as are likely to present themselves, has but imperfectly considered the bearings of the subject? Once more—

4. The diversity of characters which a Christian minister sustains intimates the importance of a studious application, in order to be consistent. An ambassador for Christ ought to study well the purport and terms of his embassy. A Christian shepherd should examine the state of his flock, the pasture they need, the dangers to which they are exposed, their wanderings from the fold, the fractures to be reduced, and the wounds to be healed. Of the Divine Shepherd it is said, that He gathers the lambs in His arms, and carries them in His bosom, and gently leads those that are with young,—the fruitful, but encumbered. This is a pattern highly worthy of imitation. A Christian church is God's building, and a minister in a church is a builder under the Divine Architect. He should study to know well the plan, and the materials to be used; he should be careful not to remove from the foundation appointed, and not to intermix with approved materials those of a mean and perishable nature, termed by the apostle, "wood, hay, and stubble." Nor should he, for want of care, daub with untempered mortar the walls of this sacred building. A Christian church is God's husbandry, and a minister is a superintendent under him; yet not a mere overlooker of the work, leaving all the labour to others. He has himself to fence, to till, to sow, to plant, to water, to weed, and to watch. "The husbandman must first labour, in order to be partaker of the fruits." A Christian church is a family, and a minister is a steward and a householder to make suitable provision for it. Of a steward it is required that he be found faithful, (and, therefore, that he labour to be so,) as Moses was over the house of God. "Every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." He has to provide milk for babes, and strong meat for the robust. Under Christ, he bears the

keys of the house, maintains order, and promotes peace. He should study to restrain the froward, and to stimulate the slothful; to encourage the orderly, and to commend the industrious.

Time would fail, were I only to glance at the characters which the Holy Scriptures ascribe to gospel ministers, and which require studious attention, vigorous exertion, or holy skill. Let those already mentioned suffice. Permit me now—

III. To suggest some *hints of encouragement* which may assist you in the prosecution of so arduous an employment.

Our Divine King does not send us to this warfare at our own charge. He is no hard master; His yoke is easy, and His burden light. We have the promise of His presence to be always with us, while properly engaged in His appointed service. But more particularly—

1. In the work which has been recommended, you may expect Divine assistance. I mean, grace sufficient for you; grace to help in time of need, as well as mercy to pardon; holy strength in your soul; the Spirit of God to help your infirmities. Wait upon the Lord, and He will renew your strength; open your desire wide, and He will fill it. Seek to please and honour Him, and He will make your soul as a well-watered and fruitful garden. Give yourself continually to the word of God and to prayer, and He will not suffer you to labour in vain, or to spend your strength for nought. Follow Christ; let that mind be in you which was in Him,—diligently teach His doctrine, and copy His example,—and He will make you "a fisher of men." The more light you give, the more will He replenish your lamp with sacred oil. The more you do or suffer for His name's sake, the more ability will He impart. "For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance." I would, again, hint that—

2. With such aid, the more you study and labour for Christ, the more easy and comfortable will be your work. Frequent acts beget habits, and habits beget facility. This, indeed, follows on mere natural principles; but we may stand on a ground of argument still higher: by meditating on these things, and giving yourself wholly to them, you are divinely encouraged to expect that your profiting will be not only real, but also apparent. By taking heed to yourself and to the gospel doctrine, with continued assiduity, you will be in the direct, appointed way of promoting

your own salvation and that of your hearers. The way of studious diligence is like the ways and paths of wisdom; it is the way of pleasantness and the path of peace. The rest of the labouring man is sweet. An approving conscience, after the most laborious efforts, is a noble repast, a continual feast. The more studious you are to be a "workman that needeth not to be ashamed," and "rightly" to divide the "word of truth," the more ready you will be for every good word and work. The musician who would excel must practise much, and thereby the more easy will be his performances, and the more exquisite his pleasure. Again—

3. In such employ you may hope for growing zeal and proportionable success. It is good to be zealously affected in a good thing, or a worthy cause; but who is the zealous minister? Is it not the studious, the diligent, the laborious? While you muse, the fire will kindle. The zeal which is not connected with previous labour, is rather a momentary flash than a steady radiance. Would you be like Jeremiah, who had the word of the Lord as "fire in his bones?" Imitate his courage, integrity, and his labours in the Lord, and you will have a portion of the same experience. Would you, like John the Baptist, be "a burning and shining light?" Imitate him in self-denial and labour to exalt Christ. Would you experience, in some measure, what Jesus expressed in a higher degree, "The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up?" Then seek to do, not your own will, but the will of Him who sends and who employs you. And remember, that generally he who is most zealous is most successful.

The more you study the approbation of God as your end, your eye will become the more single, and the whole body of your profession and ministerial labours the more full of light. The more you contemplate the word of truth in its due connexion, its harmonious consistency, its rich variety, its useful tendency, and the infinite importance of its contents, the more you may expect of holy fervour, heroic zeal, and experimental aptitude, to influence the feelings of others in the most profitable manner. Moreover—

4. While you thus honour Christ, you may hope to be honoured by Him in the consciences and affections of your people. To annihilate self and exalt Christ will be your great aim, and the glory of His cross, which is the centre of His unsearchable riches, your grand subject. Keep true to these points, and in the affections of

the godly you will have a constant residence; nor will the ungodly be able to exclude from their consciences an approving sentence. This is the true secret, if a secret it may be called, of attaining to real and lasting popularity among those whose approbation is worthy of acceptance. Further—

5. You will have some peculiar advantages in your work, when compared with a defective aim and a low attainment. One advantage is, that you may be very close and searching in your addresses without the least need of their being offensively directed to individuals from the pulpit. This mode is generally but a mean substitute for superior attainments. Another advantage is, you will not dwell on uninteresting generals, or in a distant, speculative, and abstracted statement of things. Your preaching will be pungent, without being personal; comprehensive, without being far-fetched; and familiar, without being low. Besides, you will be in the way of consistency, both with yourself and with the sacred oracles. You will resemble, in this respect, what the apostle says of the spiritual man, who "judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man." He has a standard by which he can measure others who are not spiritual, but they have no standard by which to measure him. Infidels and sceptics, the carnal and antiscriptural, have no measuring rule. And hence it is that their conduct, however base and immoral, is never said to be inconsistent with their principles, for they have none. But the privilege of being lax in sentiment and practice, without fearing the charge of inconsistency, you will be so far from envying that you will justly detest it. Besides—

6. While engaged in the manner which has been recommended, you may humbly expect the conversion of the unholy, and the edification of the converted in faith, hope, and love. Your church will be as a garden well fenced, well planted, well cultivated, and well watered; beautiful to the eye, fragrant to the smell, with fruits pleasant to the taste. Your doctrine will distill as the dew, and drop as the rain. Your discipline, in unison with the church, will be tender, yet faithful; scriptural, without forbidding peculiarities; impartial, without irritating severity. By becoming all things to all men, from a principle of charity and not of criminal time-serving, you may hope at least to "gain some." By condescending to men of low degree, whether low in the world or weak in faith, and especially by a cheerful readiness to visit the afflicted

of every class, you will become more and more endeared to the flock over which you are called to preside. By denying yourself for the good of others, you will gain much. By humbling yourself in Christian love, you shall be exalted in due time. To ministers, emphatically above others, are those words applicable, "Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted;" and, "Be ye clothed with humility."

7. Finally, you may hope for a gracious reward, as the promised portion of the good and faithful servant, while thus engaged. For all such the righteous Judge has in reserve a crown of righteousness. Being faithful in a little, they shall be made rulers over much. They shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, and all who turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. Such views and aims, such evangelical exertions, lead to the "white stone," the "hidden manna," the "living fountain," and enjoyments that are unutterable.

Long as I have detained you by this address, I cannot close it without congratulating you on the advantageous circumstances in which you are placed, while entering on your pastoral function. You now stand connected with a respectable, an orderly, a peaceable church. You follow a pastor* highly valuable and universally respected, to whose ways and spirit you are not a stranger; and of whom, as a Christian and a minister, you will frequently be in the way of hearing. You will have opportunities of observing what endeared him to the people of his charge, and what contributed to his usefulness and reputation. And here, let it not be thought unseasonable if I glance at another advantageous circumstance as it respects yourself in your present important station; I mean, your acquaintance and connexion with your own pastor,† before I had the pleasure of knowing you; a man of God, whose modesty and faithfulness, whose lively attention and sympathy, whose public services and pastoral visits have been so eminently owned. Had he been present, I could not have mentioned this; or, rather, his presence would have rendered mine unnecessary. However, study to shew yourself an example to believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the

* The Rev. J. Barber, Aldermanbury Postern.—Ed.

† The Rev. Geo. Lambert of Hull.—Ed.

gift that is in you, but stir it up; meditate on these things; give yourself wholly to them, that your profiting may appear to all. But while you take heed to yourself and your doctrine, while you look to venerable examples and clouds of witnesses, above all, be ever looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. And through all, to conclude with the words first adopted, "Study to shew yourself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

END OF VOL. III.

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